



<div>  <div> Washington State Fusion Center  <b>INFOCUS</b>  THURSDAY — 14 JUL 2022 </div>  </div>			
	International	National	Regional and Local
<b>Events, Opportunities</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">07/14 Day 141 of the Russia invasion</a> <a href="#">07/14 Russian strike central Ukraine kills 12</a> <a href="#">07/14 US rockets fresh problems for Russia</a> <a href="#">07/14 Russia troop advances stall in Donbas</a> <a href="#">07/14 NKorea recognizes 2 separatist regions</a> <a href="#">07/14 Ukraine challenges allegiance of priests</a> <a href="#">07/14 Turkey: Ukraine, Russia grain export deal</a> <a href="#">07/14 Fresh Covid wave sweeps Asia</a> <a href="#">07/14 New Zealand confronts omicron wave</a> <a href="#">07/14 EU hikes inflation forecast, cuts growth</a> <a href="#">07/14 IMF agrees to bailout Pakistan: \$4B lifeline</a> <a href="#">07/13 US: Russia committed war crimes</a> <a href="#">07/13 US: Russia forcibly deport Ukrainians</a> <a href="#">07/13 Separatists hold 3<sup>rd</sup> American captive</a> <a href="#">07/13 Ukraine strike shows impact new weapons</a> <a href="#">07/13 WHO warns Covid 'nowhere near over'</a> <a href="#">07/13 China Covid authoritarianism, not vaccine</a> <a href="#">07/13 IMF: global recession risk rising</a> <a href="#">07/13 Biden commits to Israel's security</a> <a href="#">07/13 Euro dips below parity against the dollar</a> <a href="#">07/13 Sri Lanka turmoil: confusion, anger linger</a> <a href="#">07/13 London emergency response to heatwave</a> <a href="#">07/13 Wildfires scorch Europe; extreme heat wave</a>	<a href="#">07/14 Wholesale inflation up 11.3%</a> <a href="#">07/14 Baby formula shortage deepens</a> <a href="#">07/14 Virginia inundated: flooding, landslides</a> <a href="#">07/13 Experts rue simple steps not taken</a> <a href="#">07/13 L.A. eyes return indoor mask mandate</a> <a href="#">07/13 Hawaii public schools masks optional</a> <a href="#">07/13 Forecast: Covid hospitalizations to rise</a> <a href="#">07/13 FDA clears new Covid vaccine: Novavax</a> <a href="#">07/13 Covid reinfections common not harmless</a> <a href="#">07/13 Rents rise at fastest pace in 40yrs</a> <a href="#">07/13 Inflation pain reaches beyond Sun Belt</a> <a href="#">07/13 Recession risks rise: Fed daunting task</a> <a href="#">07/13 Gas prices down sharply; but will it last?</a> <a href="#">07/13 Inflation soars, push Fed Reserve to act?</a> <a href="#">07/13 Officer beaten by cops to lead Boston PD</a> <a href="#">07/13 Ring footage to police w/out user consent</a> <a href="#">07/13 Gates gives \$20B: stem significant suffering</a> <a href="#">07/13 Arriving migrants overwhelm DC aid groups</a> <a href="#">07/13 Firefighters battle, losing ground Yosemite</a>	<a href="#">07/13 Subvariant BA.5: elusive, fuels reinfections</a> <a href="#">07/13 Inflation hits record 10.1% in Seattle</a> <a href="#">07/13 Biden nominates 2 as federal judges</a> <a href="#">07/13 Aging infrastructure finally see upgrades?</a> <a href="#">07/13 Downtown Seattle reacts SPD hiring plan</a> <a href="#">07/13 Seattle mayor \$2M plan; attract PD officers</a> <a href="#">07/13 Mayor hiring incentives for 500 cops in 5yrs</a> <a href="#">07/13 Crews clear Green River homeless camps</a> <a href="#">07/13 Spokane homeless survey count: 1,757</a>
<b>Cyber Awareness</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">07/14 China faces surveillance resistance</a> <a href="#">07/14 Pakistan hackers target India students</a> <a href="#">07/14 Ukraine: Russia disinformation remains</a> <a href="#">07/14 Retbleed speculative execution CPU attack</a> <a href="#">07/13 Ransomware activity surges</a> <a href="#">07/13 Lilith ransomware emerges w/extortion site</a> <a href="#">07/13 Game publishing giant confirms hack, theft</a>	<a href="#">07/14 Panel: Log4j flaw no 'significant' attacks</a> <a href="#">07/14 China hackers target US political reporters</a> <a href="#">07/14 Microsoft warns Mac users: install patches</a> <a href="#">07/14 CoinPayments to shut down in US</a> <a href="#">07/13 New Android malware on Google Play</a> <a href="#">07/13 Vishing scam targets small businesses</a> <a href="#">07/13 Constant scams impact to mental health</a> <a href="#">07/13 Judge freezes assets of crypto hedge fund</a>	
<b>Terror Conditions</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">07/13 US to keep IRGC on terror list</a> <a href="#">07/13 Europol: attacks down, terrorism still threat</a>	<a href="#">07/13 NCTC warns of Iran assassination plots</a> <a href="#">07/13 Militia group founder jailed domestic terror</a>	
<b>Suspicious, Unusual</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>		<a href="#">07/13 Long Island: 5<sup>th</sup> shark attack in 2 weeks</a> <a href="#">07/13 Webb telescope: 5 things from first images</a>	
<b>Crime, Criminals</b> <a href="#">Go to articles</a>	<a href="#">07/14 Russia warns US: no pressure on prisoner</a>	<a href="#">07/14 Bomb threats disrupt college campuses</a> <a href="#">07/13 Guilty: ex-CIA engineer in secret info theft</a> <a href="#">07/13 DOJ charges 2 for human smuggling cases</a> <a href="#">07/13 Video deepens Uvalde families' pain, anger</a>	<a href="#">07/13 SPD, mayor target crime hot spots</a> <a href="#">07/13 Seattle Hip Hop concert: 50 shots fired</a> <a href="#">07/13 Shooting erupts from 3 vehicles on I-5</a> <a href="#">07/13 SCSO: drive-by shooting injures 2 teens</a> <a href="#">07/13 Bellevue police property crime crackdown</a> <a href="#">07/13 Guilty plea: disabled govt. communication</a> <a href="#">07/13 Accused vandals members of a hate group</a> <a href="#">07/13 Guilty pleas: smuggling illegal animal parts</a>

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## Events, Opportunities

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Wholesale inflation up 11.3%
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/inflation-economy-prices-producer-b24934f32f965f43c9ebb888a730543c">https://apnews.com/article/inflation-economy-prices-producer-b24934f32f965f43c9ebb888a730543c</a>
GIST	WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation at the wholesale level climbed 11.3% in June compared with a year earlier, the latest painful reminder that inflation is running hot through the American economy.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that the U.S. producer price index — which measures inflation before it hits consumers — rose at the fastest pace since hitting a record 11.6% in March.

Last month's jump in wholesale inflation was led by energy prices, which soared 54% from a year earlier. But even excluding food and energy prices, which can swing wildly from month to month, producer prices in June jumped 8.2% from June 2021. On a month-to-month basis, wholesale inflation rose 1.1% from May to June, also the biggest jump since March.

Thursday's report on wholesale prices came a day after the Labor Department reported that surging prices for gas, food and rent [catapulted consumer inflation to a new four-decade peak in June](#), further pressuring households and likely sealing the case for another large interest rate hike by the Federal Reserve. Consumer prices soared 9.1% compared with a year earlier, the biggest yearly increase since 1981.

Producer prices have surged nearly 18% for goods and nearly 8% for services compared with June 2021. And the Labor Department said wholesale transportation and warehousing prices shot up 23% and food prices nearly 13% from a year ago.

The persistence of high inflation has eroded incomes, intensified price pressures on companies large and small and raised the risk of an economic downturn as a result of ever-higher borrowing costs. It has also diminished the public's approval of President Joe Biden and dimmed Democratic prospects in the November congressional elections.

The Fed has embarked on an aggressive series of rate hikes that are intended to tame high inflation without causing a recession — a notoriously difficult challenge.

The U.S. inflation surge erupted from the swift rebound from the 2020 pandemic recession, and it steadily accelerated as spending outstripped the availability of labor and supplies. Generous government aid and super-low rates engineered by the Fed sent consumers on a spending spree that surprised businesses. Factories, ports and freight yards were overwhelmed, leading to shortages, delays and higher prices. Russia's war against Ukraine magnified energy and food inflation.

Some economists have held out hope that inflation might be reaching a short-term peak. Gas prices have been falling. Shipping costs and commodity prices have moderated. Pay increases have slowed. And surveys show that Americans' expectations for inflation over the long run have eased — a trend that often points to more moderate price increases ahead.

But this week's reports showing persistently high consumer and wholesale inflation pressures indicate that the Fed will remain under pressure to continue raising rates sharply in the coming months. The strength of the U.S. job market, with robust hiring and unemployment at a near-half-century low, means that more people have paychecks to spend, which will keep upward pressure on prices.

"Despite a modest improvement in supply conditions, price pressures will remain uncomfortable in the near term and bolster the Fed's resolve to prevent inflation from becoming entrenched in the economy," Mahir Rasheed, U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, said in a research note.

He added, "Higher production costs will sustain upside risks to consumer prices as businesses tease out how much additional pass-through consumers will tolerate."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Russia troop advances stall in Donbas</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/14/russian-troop-advances-stall-following-attacks-don/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jul/14/russian-troop-advances-stall-following-attacks-don/</a>
GIST	Russian troops in the disputed Donbas region of Ukraine have achieved "no significant territorial advances" over the last 72 hours, despite having launched a number of artillery strikes across a broad front and assaults by platoon and company-sized units onto the battlefield to gauge Ukrainian resistance, British intelligence officials said Thursday.

	<p>Russian forces are now in danger of losing any momentum built up following the capture of Lysychansk, the last city in the Luhansk Oblast in eastern Ukraine that was still under Kyiv's control, according to British military intelligence officials.</p> <p>"The aging vehicles, weapons, and Soviet-era tactics used by Russian forces do not lend themselves to quickly regaining or building momentum unless used in overwhelming mass — which Russia is currently unable to bring to bear," British officials tweeted Thursday.</p> <p>Officials in London also said prospects for substantive talks to end the conflict in Ukraine remain low, despite recent negotiations between Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the United Nations on grain exports and prisoner exchanges.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Russian strike central Ukraine kills 12</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/14/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#vinnytsia-rocket-attack">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/14/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#vinnytsia-rocket-attack</a>
GIST	<p>Russian rockets hit an office building in central Ukraine on Thursday morning, killing at least 12 people and wounding 25, officials said, in the latest strike on a civilian target in Ukraine that did not appear to have a direct military objective.</p> <p>Three rockets hit the center of Vinnytsia, a provincial capital, at around 10:30 a.m. according to Ukraine's National Police. The State Emergency Service said a baby was among those killed in the attack, which prompted 90 rescue workers to rush to the site.</p> <p>Videos released by the agency showed smoke pouring out of multistory building and fire crews dousing water on the smoldering husks of upturned vehicles.</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine condemned the attack. "Every day, Russia destroys the civilian population, kills Ukrainian children, directs rockets at civilian objects," he said. "What is this, if not an open act of terrorism?"</p> <p>After the explosions, frightened residents stood on the sidewalks, watching a coiling plume of black smoke rise from the city center. People were scared, although the strikes "are familiar to us" now, Iryna Mykhailova, a nanny living in Vinnytsia, said by telephone.</p> <p>Another witness, Raisa Ludanova, said, "I had no time to get scared because it was a sudden loud noise and a window in my room was blown off. "</p> <p>Vinnytsia, which had a prewar population of more than 370,000, lies west of the Dnipro River, hundreds of miles from the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, the focus of Moscow's military campaign in recent weeks. The area has not seen significant attacks since early March, days after Russia's invasion, when <a href="#">Russian cruise missiles struck an airport in the city</a>.</p> <p>But the strike on Thursday fit a pattern of deadly Russian strikes on civilian targets that seemed to have little military significance.</p> <p>In the eastern village of Chasiv Yar, the State Emergency Service said that the death toll from a strike that hit an apartment complex over the weekend had risen to 48, making it one of the deadliest attacks on civilians since the war began.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 NKorea recognizes 2 separatist regions</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/14/Ukraine-Donbas-Donetsk-Lugansk-diplomatic-recognition/2011657790879/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/07/14/Ukraine-Donbas-Donetsk-Lugansk-diplomatic-recognition/2011657790879/</a>

GIST	<p>SEOUL, July 14 (UPI) -- <a href="#">North Korea</a> formally recognized two pro-Russian separatist regions in <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, state media announced Thursday, becoming just the third nation to do so.</p> <p>Pyongyang's Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui sent letters to her counterparts in the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Wednesday, Korean Central News Agency reported.</p> <p>Choe wrote that North Korea "decided to recognize the independence" of the two regions in eastern Ukraine and "expressed the will to develop the state-to-state relations with those countries in the idea of independence, peace and friendship," KCNA said.</p> <p>Fighting between Russian-backed rebels and Ukrainian government forces sparked up in 2014 across the region, also known as Donbas, with separatists controlling parts of the two industrial centers since then.</p> <p>In February, Russian President Vladimir recognized the self-declared Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics -- also known as the DNR and LNR -- shortly ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Last month, Syria became the second country to establish diplomatic relations with the two quasi-states.</p> <p>On Wednesday, Kiev announced that it was <a href="#">severing diplomatic ties</a> with North Korea over the move, calling it "an attempt by Pyongyang to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine."</p> <p>"Russia's appeal to the DPRK for support in legitimizing the forceful seizure of a part of the Ukrainian territory speaks more about Moscow's toxicity than Pyongyang's," Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said in a statement.</p> <p>"Russia has no more allies in the world, except for countries that depend on it financially and politically, and the level of isolation of the Russian Federation will soon reach the level of isolation of the DPRK," Kuleba added.</p> <p>The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the official name of North Korea.</p> <p>North Korea has publicly expressed its support for the Russian invasion, blaming NATO expansion and America's "hegemonic policy" for creating the crisis in Ukraine.</p> <p>Russia, meanwhile, joined China <a href="#">in vetoing</a> a U.S.-led U.N. Security Council resolution to impose additional sanctions on North Korea in May, highlighting a widening geopolitical divide.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Fresh Covid wave sweeps Asia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/fresh-covid-wave-sweeps-asia-nz-warns-pressure-hospitals-2022-07-14/">https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/fresh-covid-wave-sweeps-asia-nz-warns-pressure-hospitals-2022-07-14/</a>
GIST	<p>WELLINGTON/TOKYO, July 14 (Reuters) - A new wave of coronavirus infections is rapidly spreading through Asia, prompting warnings for residents from New Zealand to Japan to take precautions to slow the outbreak and help prevent healthcare systems from being overwhelmed.</p> <p>The renewed surge in cases, mostly of the BA.4/5 Omicron variants, provides a further challenge for authorities grappling with the economic fallout of earlier waves of the pandemic while trying to avoid extending or reintroducing unpopular restrictions.</p> <p>The New Zealand government on Thursday announced free masks and rapid antigen tests as it tries to relieve pressure on the country's health system, which is dealing with an influx of both COVID and influenza patients during the southern hemisphere winter.</p>

"There's no question the combination of a spike in COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations, the worst flu season in recent memory and corresponding staff absences are putting health workers and the whole health system under extreme pressure," Ayesha Verrall, Minister for COVID-19 Response, said in a statement.

New Zealand, which has a population of 5.1 million, has almost 69,000 currently infected with the virus. Of those, 765 cases are in hospital, which has caused increases in wait times and surgeries to be cancelled.

In Japan, new COVID-19 cases have surged to levels not seen since early this year. The government has called on people to be especially careful ahead of an upcoming long weekend and imminent summer school vacations.

Japan reported almost 95,000 cases on Wednesday and newly infected patients have increased by 2.14-fold compared to the last week, according to a government spokesperson.

"The number of new cases is rising in every prefecture in Japan, and it seems to be rapidly spreading," Health Minister Shigeyuki Goto said at the start of a committee meeting on dealing with the coronavirus.

Tokyo raised its alert level to the highest tier. "Tomorrow, we will hold a meeting of the task force to decide on measures to be taken this summer, taking into consideration the national trend and the opinions of experts," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said at a meeting.

Like New Zealand, South Korea was praised for its response early in the pandemic, but by Wednesday, daily cases there had tripled in a week to more than 39,000.

Officials and experts expect South Korea's new daily cases to reach 200,000 by around mid-August to end-September and are expanding inoculations of booster shots but not planning renewed curbs.

Australia warned it could be hit with its worst COVID-19 outbreak over the next few weeks fuelled by the BA.4/5 Omicron variants. Authorities said "millions" of new infections could be expected, but ruled out any tough restrictions to contain the spread.

"We've moved beyond that ... we're not in the era of lockdowns and those sorts of things," Federal Health Minister Mark Butler told radio station 2GB on Thursday, even as he urged Australians to consider working from home again.

Australian hospital admissions are already hovering near levels seen in the last major Omicron outbreak earlier this year with its health system also under pressure from high COVID and influenza numbers.

While cases in Thailand have trended down, infections in Indonesia have picked up, reaching the highest since March.

New infections and hospitalisations in the Philippines remain low, but the government has warned case numbers could rise at least 20-fold by the end of the month.

Manila is urging more people to get their booster shots as health ministry data shows only a quarter of eligible adults have received their first booster as of July 12.

Mainland China has reported an average of over 300 locally transmitted COVID daily infections in July, higher than around 70 in June, as Beijing's strict "dynamic COVID-zero" policy helps keep local clusters in check and has prevented any overwhelming of hospitals.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 L.A. eyes return indoor mask mandate
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/masks-indoors-covid-19/2022/07/14/id/1078716/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/masks-indoors-covid-19/2022/07/14/id/1078716/</a>

## GIST

Nick Barragan is used to wearing a mask because his job in the Los Angeles film industry has long required it, so he won't be fazed if the nation's most populous county reinstates rules requiring face coverings because of another spike in coronavirus cases across the country.

"I feel fine about it because I've worn one pretty much constantly for the last few years. It's become a habit," said Barragan, masked up while out running errands Wednesday.

Los Angeles County, home to 10 million residents, is facing a return to a broad indoor mask mandate later this month if current trends in hospital admissions continue, county health Director Barbara Ferrer said this week.

Nationwide, the latest COVID-19 surge is driven by the highly transmissible BA.5 variant, which now accounts for 65% of cases with its cousin BA.4 contributing another 16%. The variants have shown a remarkable ability to get around the protection offered by vaccination.

With the new omicron variants again pushing hospitalizations and deaths higher in recent weeks, states and cities are rethinking their responses and the White House is stepping up efforts to alert the public.

Some experts said the warnings are too little, too late.

"It's well past the time when the warning could have been put out there," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, who has called BA.5 "the worst variant yet."

Global trends for the two mutants have been apparent for weeks, experts said — they quickly out-compete older variants and push cases higher wherever they appear. Yet Americans have tossed off their masks and jumped back into travel and social gatherings. And they have largely ignored booster shots, which protect against COVID-19's worst outcomes. Courts have blocked federal mask and vaccine mandates, tying the hands of U.S. officials.

"We learn a lot from how the virus is acting elsewhere and we should apply the knowledge here," said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle.

White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha appeared on morning TV on Wednesday urging booster shots and renewed vigilance. Yet Mokdad said federal health officials need to be push harder on masks indoors, early detection and prompt antiviral treatment.

"They are not doing all that they can," Mokdad said.

The administration's challenge, in the view of the White House, is not their messaging, but people's willingness to hear it — due to pandemic fatigue and the politicization of the virus response.

For months, the White House has encouraged Americans to make use of free or cheap at-home rapid tests to detect the virus, as well as the free and effective antiviral treatment Paxlovid that protects against serious illness and death. On Tuesday, the White House response team called on all adults 50 and older to urgently get a booster if they haven't yet this year — and dissuaded people from waiting for the next generation of shots expected in the fall when they can roll up their sleeves and get some protection now.

Requiring masks again "helps us to reduce risk," Ferrer told Los Angeles County supervisors. She is expected to discuss details of the potential new county mandate during a public health briefing Thursday afternoon.

"I do recognize that when we return to universal indoor masking to reduce high spread, for many this will feel like a step backwards," Ferrer said Tuesday.

For most of the pandemic, Los Angeles County has required masks in some indoor spaces, including health care facilities, Metro trains and buses, airports, jails and homeless shelters. The new mandate would



expand the requirement to all indoor public spaces, including shared offices, manufacturing facilities, warehouses, retail stores, restaurants and bars, theaters and schools.

It's unclear what enforcement might look like. Under past mandates, officials favored educating people over issuing citations and fines.

Sharon Fayette ripped off her mask the moment she stepped out of a Lyft ride in Los Angeles Wednesday and groaned when informed another universal mask requirement might be coming. "Oh man, when will it end?" she wondered about the pandemic.

Fayette said she was exhausted by shifting regulations and dubious another mandate would be followed by most residents. "I just think people are over it, over all the rules," she said.

Barragan said he learned a harsh lesson about the effectiveness of masks when he went without a face covering at a film industry mixer last month in Los Angeles. "I thought it would be fine because we were all outdoors," said Barragan, 35. A few days later he started feeling sick and, sure enough, tested positive.

He'd avoided catching the virus for more than two years because he was religious about masking up. "The one time I took it off, I caught it!" he laughed.

The nation's brief lull in COVID deaths has reversed. Last month, daily deaths were falling, though they never matched last year's low, and deaths are now heading up again.

The seven-day average for daily deaths in the U.S. rose 26% over the past two weeks to 489 on July 12.

The coronavirus is not killing nearly as many as it was last fall and winter, and experts do not expect death to reach those levels again soon. But hundreds of daily deaths for a summertime respiratory illness would normally be jaw-dropping, said Andrew Noymer, a public health professor at the University of California, Irvine. He noted that in Orange County, California, 46 people died of COVID-19 in June.

"That would be all hands on deck," Noymer said. "People would be like, 'There's this crazy new flu that's killing people in June.'"

Instead, simple, proven precautions are not being taken. Vaccinations, including booster shots for those eligible, lower the risk of hospitalization and death — even against the latest variants. But less than half of all eligible U.S. adults have gotten a single booster shot, and only about 1 in 4 Americans age 50 and older who are eligible for a second booster have received one.

"This has been a botched booster campaign," Topol said, noting that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still uses the term "fully vaccinated" for people with two shots of Moderna or Pfizer. "They haven't gotten across that two shots is totally inadequate," he said.

Noymer said if he were in charge of the nation's COVID response he would level with the American people in an effort to get their attention in this third year of the pandemic. He would tell Americans to take it seriously, mask indoors and "until we get better vaccines, there's going to be a new normal of a disease that kills over 100,000 Americans a year and impacts life expectancy."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Firefighters battle, losing ground Yosemite
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.arcamax.com/currentnews/newsheadlines/s-2700001?print">https://www.arcamax.com/currentnews/newsheadlines/s-2700001?print</a>
GIST	<p>More than 1,000 firefighters were battling the Washburn fire in Yosemite National Park on Wednesday, but crews lost ground overnight as containment fell slightly.</p> <p>Containment on Wednesday was estimated at 17%, according to Stanley Bercovitz, a spokesperson with the U.S. Forest Service and part of the California Incident Management Agency. That remains</p>

unchanged from Tuesday evening's report but represents a 5% decrease from Tuesday's morning report that estimated fire containment at around 22%.

Bercovitz said the fire had grown over 200 acres since Tuesday evening, from 3,516 to 3,772 acres as of Wednesday morning.

Yosemite National Park Superintendent Cicely Muldoon said there was no lightning July 7, the day the fire started, and that it appeared to be human-caused. The incident managers say the cause is under investigation.

As of Tuesday evening, the size of the personnel team has also increased by 396 since Tuesday morning's reported crew size of 650 people.

There are now 1,045 crew members dedicated to the Washburn fire, including everything from forest crews, hotshot crews, engines of various sizes, water tenders, and bulldozers, said Bercovitz.

Hot and dry weather was expected Wednesday, but no major winds, which Bercovitz described as the "big fear" for the Washburn fire's growth.

He also said the public should know that "there are no great surprises" in the fire activity so far.

"We're still quite fortunate that this is not a large wind-driven fire. It's mainly been driven by the terrain and winds that go upslope in the afternoon and down in the evenings," said Bercovitz. Current wind patterns are below 20 mph, and sustained winds are "very minor."

"That's really fortunate for this fire," he said. "It's important for people to be aware of the fact that it's growing through extremely old growth forests."

Longer, hotter summers and warm periods are drying things out, which is what's putting up the large column of smoke each day, typically in the afternoon when things heat up.

"That's to be expected," Bercovitz said. People should "be prepared to see that each day."

Based on a statement from the National Park Service on Wednesday, officials expect "active-to-very active fire behavior" over the next several days, especially in areas with "heavy dead and down fuels." The statement continues that "afternoon conditions are producing areas of high-intensity fire behavior on the east flank of the fire resulting in additional acreage."

As of Wednesday, Mariposa Grove remained closed until further notice, and the community of Wawona remained under an evacuation order. Wawona Road (Highway 41) is closed from the park's south entrance near Fish Camp to Henness Ridge Road.

As of Wednesday, all media tours on the southern entrance have been canceled for "safety's sake" due to the fire, smoke, and trees that have been damaged. "Things are still in a state of flux," Bercovitz said.

The Sierra National Forest, which is also impacted by the Washburn fire, issued an order on Monday morning that prohibits the use of fire, campfire, stove fire, and smoking through Nov. 15.

Firefighters working to protect giant sequoias

In an official update on Wednesday morning, officials celebrated the coordinated efforts of the local, county, state, and federal response to the Washburn fire — and gave credit to the "proactive" fire management program at Yosemite National Park.

The update also points to the historical factors that gave way to today's fire conditions. "The Sierra Nevada is experiencing the repercussions of 100+ years of fire exclusion," according to the update.



	<p>However, Yosemite National Park has conducted prescribed burns for over 50 years. “This, combined with fuel reduction treatments, defensible space programs, and biomass reduction, has created opportunities for firefighters to be successful on the Washburn fire to date,” read the update.</p> <p>Still, Bercovitz said there’s “a lot of forest litter multiple feet deep,” which is fueling the growth of the Washburn fire. “Trees die naturally and the branches break off, needles break off for hundreds of years, and that’s built up.”</p> <p>Fire crews expressed confidence on Monday night that they would save Mariposa Grove, an area that contains hundreds of mature giant sequoia trees, some of which are thousands of years old, near the southern entrance to the park.</p> <p>The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias has experienced “minimal fire impacts” due to a long history of prescribed burning and proactive fire management and fuel reduction.</p> <p>“As a result, there have been no known loss of any large giant sequoias,” read the statement.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Inflation pain reaches beyond Sun Belt</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/inflation-pain-reaches-beyond-us-sun-belt-as-more-cities-top-10">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/inflation-pain-reaches-beyond-us-sun-belt-as-more-cities-top-10</a>
GIST	<p>A broader sweep of US cities crossed the 10% inflation threshold last month, as the pain from soaring prices moved beyond the Sun Belt into large coastal markets.</p> <p>Seven metropolitan areas saw inflation hit double digits in June, led by Urban Alaska, which saw prices climb at a 12.4% pace -- up from 7.5% in April. Cities crossing the 10% barrier for the first time include Baltimore, Miami, Houston and Seattle, according to the <a href="#">Bureau of Labor Statistics</a>. Phoenix and Atlanta retained their perch near the top of the list.</p> <p>While prices are rising for most goods and services, it’s housing -- which makes up almost one-third of the consumer-price index -- that’s behind much of the extra inflation across the South and Southwest, as rents and home prices soar. Miami and Atlanta, for example, saw housing costs rise by 11.5% and 11% respectively over the past year, compared with a 7.3% rise across all US cities.</p> <p>Gas prices have fallen about 38 cents a gallon over the past month, giving motorists some relief, but they’re still up by 47% nationally over the past year, according to the American Automobile Association. Drivers in Phoenix have been especially hard hit, with gas prices there climbing 62% from a year earlier. Gasoline costs weigh more heavily in spread-out cities of the South and West whose residents are more dependent on cars than in some eastern metro areas.</p> <p>Food prices were a big part of the inflation story in June, and they rose faster in some places than others. A jump of 12.3% in the Baltimore metro area adds to economic pain of a city where 20% of residents live in poverty, according to the US Census Bureau. By comparison, food prices rose 10.4% across the country.</p> <p>The nationwide US inflation rate rose to 9.1% in June. The government tracks local prices in 23 metro areas, with New York, Los Angeles and Chicago reporting inflation every month and the other cities doing so every second month.</p> <p>Tampa, Florida, and Riverside, California, led the major metro areas that reported prices in May, with inflation rates of 11.3% and 9.4% respectively.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Rents rise at fastest pace in 40yrs</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://finance.yahoo.com/news/rents-us-rise-fastest-pace-161957394.html">https://finance.yahoo.com/news/rents-us-rise-fastest-pace-161957394.html</a>
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- Rents rose in the US last month at the fastest pace since 1986, helping to propel overall inflation to a fresh four-decade high.</p> <p>An index measuring rent of a primary residence was 0.8% higher in June than the month before, an acceleration from the 0.6% increase recorded in May, according to the Labor Department's report on consumer prices published Wednesday. In the 12 months through June, rents were up 5.8%.</p> <p>Those costs are soaring across the country as would-be homebuyers get priced out by the fastest-rising mortgage rates in decades and slide back into the overcrowded rental market. But rent growth may be peaking as affordability concerns mount, and a surge in construction of new units is poised to start adding to the available inventory.</p> <p>The Labor Department measure tends to lag behind other estimates, so it is likely that rent increases will contribute to rising inflation in the consumer price index through the rest of this year, according to Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody's Analytics.</p> <p>"The big increase in CPI rents is catch-up with the consistent double-digit growth in market rents," Zandi said. "The good news is that market rents appear to be topping out, as renters are not able to afford the higher rents and are balking. More rental supply is also coming, although this will take a year or two to have a meaningful impact on market rents."</p> <p>Nearly 836,000 multifamily units are under construction, the most since 1973, according to Jay Parsons, chief economist at RealPage. But most new construction targets higher-income tenants and not the lower end, where supply shortages are most extreme, he said.</p> <p>Wage growth continues to outpace rent increases, but that gap is rapidly closing.</p> <p>"Affordability is not a major headwind yet in the market-rate rental sector, but it could quickly become one if wage growth slows," Parsons said.</p> <p>Rents, along with a category known as owners' equivalent rent that often moves in tandem, account for more than 30% of the consumer price index, giving them outsize weight in overall inflation trends. Given the close ties between rents and wages, the accelerating pace of increases will keep Federal Reserve officials on an aggressive tightening path.</p> <p>Average hourly earnings for production and nonsupervisory workers rose 6.4% in the 12 months through June and have generally outpaced rents since the pandemic began -- a reversal of the trend that prevailed throughout much of the economic expansion of the 2010s. But the gap has narrowed in recent months as increases in earnings have moderated and rental inflation has accelerated.</p> <p>"Even if rents are coming down later this year, the CPI measure will likely still have rent surging well into 2023," said Anna Wong, the chief US economist for Bloomberg Economics. "If the Fed is reacting to CPI in setting monetary policy, that means that they could be hiking well into economic weakness."</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Baby formula shortage deepens</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/baby-formula-shortage-deepens-defying-replenishment-efforts-11657796400">https://www.wsj.com/articles/baby-formula-shortage-deepens-defying-replenishment-efforts-11657796400</a>
GIST	<p>U.S. stores are still struggling to stock <a href="#">baby formula</a> despite monthslong efforts by manufacturers and the Biden administration to boost supplies.</p> <p>Availability of powdered formula products in U.S. stores earlier this month dropped to the lowest level so far this year, with about 30% of products out of stock for the week ended July 3, according to the market-research firm IRI. While availability improved slightly last week, <a href="#">out-of-stock levels</a> remain higher than in</p>

recent months, and shortages remain acute in states including Alaska, Utah and Wyoming, IRI data showed.

At the same time, consumers are finding fewer choices of brands, sizes or formats of formula on grocery-store shelves as the variety of available products shrinks. U.S. supermarkets over the four weeks ended June 26 sold an average of 11 different formula products per store weekly, according to IRI, compared with a weekly average of 24 from 2018 to 2021.

Keith Milligan, controller of Piggly Wiggly stores in Georgia and Alabama, said his stores are carrying five of the 30 formula products they typically sell, compared with about 10 in late spring. Store shelves aren't empty, but have many gaps, Mr. Milligan said, and customers are purchasing what is available.

"It has not improved at all," Mr. Milligan said of Piggly Wiggly's formula supply.

Formula supplies have run low partly because of [a surge in buying](#) earlier this year that depleted store inventories, said Krishnakumar Davey, president of client engagement at IRI. Mr. Davey said consumers are now working through supplies at home and buying smaller-size containers when they do make purchases.

The [baby-formula shortage](#), sparked by supply-chain problems and the shutdown of a major plant, has for months left parents and caregivers scouring stores and websites for formula to feed their babies. The Covid-19 pandemic caused disruptions beginning in 2020, with problems for some formula makers tied to shipping, raw materials and packaging. In February, [Abbott Laboratories](#), which makes Similac and other brands, halted production at its factory in Sturgis, Mich., and initiated a recall while food-safety regulators investigated a possibly deadly contamination.

Abbott restarted its Michigan plant—which had been responsible for producing roughly one-fifth of U.S. formula—in early June, but stopped less than two weeks later after thunderstorms flooded part of the facility. Abbott said last weekend that it [had reopened the plant](#) again on July 1 and restarted production of EleCare formula, made for babies with digestive problems, which will begin shipping in the next few weeks. Abbott is working to resume production of its widely sold formula Similac as soon as possible, the company said.

Abbott has imported tens of millions of pounds of formula from its manufacturing facilities in Ireland and Spain, the company said.

The FDA has been investigating consumer complaints related to four cases of a bacterial infection in infants who consumed formula from Abbott's Sturgis plant, including two babies who died. Abbott said there is no definitive link between the deaths and its products.

The Biden administration has sought to augment U.S. formula supplies through efforts such as bringing in overseas products to be sold at stores or online and distributed to hospitals.

In May, the White House directed the Defense Department to use its contracts with commercial air-cargo lines to bring formula from other countries into the U.S. The effort, known as Operation Fly Formula, by July 17 will have flown in baby formula on nearly 50 flights from places such as Europe, Australia and Mexico, and transported the equivalent of more than 55 million 8-ounce bottles to the U.S., according to the administration.

U.S. consumers typically purchase enough powdered formula to make about 65 million 8-ounce bottles a week, according to IRI data.

A senior Biden administration official said imported formula has served as a critical bridge for consumers until increased U.S. production is expected to begin hitting shelves this month. The administration in May invoked the Defense Production Act to require suppliers to give priority to ingredient shipments to formula

makers, which the official said was enabling U.S.-based manufacturers to boost production by as much as 40%.

The official said consumers would likely start to see greater formula supplies hitting the market this month, with retailers already rebuilding inventories following recent surges in demand during which families stocked their pantries.

This year through July 3, sales of powdered baby formula were more than 4% higher by volume compared with a year earlier, according to IRI data. Sales surged 52% during a single week in mid-May when President Biden announced efforts to address the shortage but have declined in recent weeks.

The senior Biden administration official said individual companies are handling distribution of imported formulas to retailers and medical facilities, with some supplies dedicated to medical channels for the neediest infants.

Some food retailers said the supply of baby formula hasn't changed much in recent weeks, while others said overall inventory has improved but that they are receiving a narrower variety of products. Imports appear to be "a drop in the bucket," said Piggly Wiggly's Mr. Milligan, whose stores don't have access to overseas supplies.

Robert Cleveland, head of infant-formula operations in North America and Europe for Reckitt Benckiser Group PLC, which makes Enfamil, said the company is importing the equivalent of 66 million 8-ounce bottles between now and November, while increasing production in its U.S. facilities.

"We're shipping as much as we possibly can as fast as we can," Mr. Cleveland said. "Until those shelves are full, the crisis continues."

Formula makers such as Reckitt have been adjusting production to increase volumes during the shortage. Reckitt has reduced production of its powdered formula packaged in tubs, favoring products packaged in cardboard boxes because they are faster to manufacture and contain more, Mr. Cleveland said.

Kroger Co. said that it is maintaining a purchase limit of four formula containers per customer, and that it is receiving some products through the White House effort, though overall availability hasn't much improved.

In the Midwest, Hy-Vee Inc. said that overall supply has increased, but that not all items are available, with availability changing week to week. Tops Markets LLC, based in Williamsville, N.Y., said that challenges remain and that it expects improvements later this month.

In Columbus, Ohio, Marissa Jones said she has seen more formula on store shelves recently, but not the Similac Advance Ready to Feed product she needs for her 6-month-old son. Ms. Jones said that giving her son other formulas has led to vomiting and gassiness.

Ms. Jones said she has traveled to stores farther away from home to find the product, while scouring social media for tips from other parents and storegoers.

"Me and other moms are battling to see who can get formula first," said Ms. Jones. "It shouldn't be that way."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 US rockets fresh problems for Russia
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/14/europe/ukraine-western-weapons-russia-front-lines-intl-cmd/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/14/europe/ukraine-western-weapons-russia-front-lines-intl-cmd/index.html</a>
GIST	(CNN)There's a new and potentially very significant factor in the Ukrainian conflict: the Ukrainians' ability to use <a href="#">recently supplied Western systems</a> to hit Russian command posts, logistical hubs and ammunition dumps a long way beyond the front lines.

In the past week, there have been enormous explosions in several occupied areas in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The available evidence, from satellite imagery and Western analysts, is that the targeting has been highly effective.

For months the Ukrainian military pleaded for long-range precision artillery and rocket systems from Western partners. Now they have them and are deploying them to considerable effect in both the south and east of the country.

The Ukrainian military is not giving away many specifics but Vadim Denysenko, a senior official at the Interior Ministry, said Wednesday that in the past two weeks, "above all things thanks to the weapons that Ukraine received, we were able to destroy approximately two dozen warehouses with weapons and stocks of fuel and lubricants. This will certainly affect the intensity of fire" the Russians can muster, he said.

Best-in-class is the US-supplied HIMARS multiple launch rocket system, but the Ukrainians have also received M777 howitzers from both the US and Canada, and Caesar long-range howitzers from France. In addition, the UK has committed to providing M270 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), which are more powerful than HIMARS, but it's unclear when Ukraine will complete training on the system and deploy it.

The HIMARS' versatility is in its name: the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. Its mobility makes it harder to target and it can be crewed by just eight soldiers. The rockets supplied to Ukraine have a range of 70 to 80 kilometers (about 50 miles). And their GPS guidance systems make them extremely accurate.

As Mick Ryan, a military analyst and former Australian major-general, puts it: "It is used to destroy critical communications nodes, command posts, airfields, and important logistics facilities."

Senior Russian officers are therefore especially vulnerable. HIMARS' accuracy also means the Ukrainians can worry less about civilian casualties. The guided rockets are accurate to within two to three meters, two defense officials told CNN, allowing the Ukrainians to use far fewer rounds to hit targets precisely at distance.

The HIMARS appears to have been used in a massive strike against a warehouse in the town of Nova Kakhovka in the Kherson region on Monday night. The strike set off secondary explosions and caused widespread damage, according to satellite imagery reviewed by CNN. The imagery showed how precise the attack had been, leaving just one small crater.

Local pro-Russian officials said parts of one HIMARS rockets were recovered; the serial numbers matched the weapon.

There were also large explosions in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, setting off multiple detonations. The same happened at Shakhtarsk in Donetsk and in the Kherson region at the weekend, as well as near Melitopol in Zaporizhzhia last week.

Altogether, it appears that about a dozen targets deep behind Russian lines have been hit in July, most of them at least 40 kilometers behind the front -- a distance at which accuracy with old Tochka-U missiles would be difficult.

The Ukrainians have also been firing HIMARS at night, making it more difficult for the Russians to spot and strike the launchers. Russian forces have struggled to fight at night since the beginning of the conflict, and the Ukrainians are still using this to their advantage.

### **Changing the battlefield**

Targeting may also have been made easier by the way the Russian military stores and moves its weapons. Phillips O'Brien, professor strategic studies at St Andrews University, says the Nova Kakhovka strike is revealing "about the state of the logistics war and the real problems the Russians face."

The target was adjacent to a rail hub, vital to the Russian logistics effort to sustain their offensive, and so was an obvious target.

"The Russians left a ludicrously easy to locate, major supply depot exactly where someone would expect to find it. Either the Russians are unable to react because of command failure or they can't actually move the depots because they lack the road movement," O'Brien tweeted.

One Ukrainian official hinted that targeting the warehouse had been easy. Serhiy Khlan, a member of Kherson regional council, said on Facebook: "In Nova Kakhovka minus one Russian ammo depot. They brought, brought, stockpiled, stockpiled and now have fireworks at night."

Ben Hodges, the former commander of the US Army in Europe, tweeted after the Kherson attack at the weekend: "Least favorite job in the Russian Army? Ammunition handler."

In a briefing last week, a senior US Defense Department official said that "the focus on higher capability, precision, further-range weapons" for Ukraine was front and center.

On Friday, the Pentagon announced a shipment to Ukraine of 1,000 rounds of 155mm artillery shells -- but a newer munition with greater accuracy, according to the official. The Ukrainians have been expending 155mm munitions at a rate of 3,000 a day. Like HIMARS, the more accurate rounds should mean fewer are needed.

The official contended that HIMARS was changing the battlefield. "What we've seen is the ability of the Ukrainians to use these HIMARS systems to significantly disrupt the ability of the Russians to move forward."

"If the Russians think they can outlast the Ukrainians, they need to rethink that," the official added.

A Russian military reporter, Yuri Kotenok, said this week that the HIMARS represents "a serious threat. The liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, the DPR and the LPR, as well as the territory of Russia, fall under the possible fire of HIMARS."

Kotenok, who has nearly 300,000 followers on Telegram, said Russian air defenses need to be improved -- as does the targeting of HIMARS, whether in transit or deployed. He said that "If this continues, it is necessary to hit the decision-making centers. Our limitations in retaliatory strikes against the enemy are to some extent incomprehensible to me."

Another Russian reporter, Roman Sapenkov, said he witnessed the strike at the weekend on the Russian base at Kherson's airport.

"I was struck by the fact that the whole packet, five or six rockets, landed practically on a penny. Usually MLRS lands in a wide area, and at maximum range they scatter like a fan," he wrote, referring to multiple launch rocket systems that are less advanced than HIMARS or the M777.

"It is clear this is just the beginning ... They will cover all the command posts and military facilities; the data for this has been collected for the last 4 months."

### **The importance of pallets**

One problem for the Russians may be the way they transport munitions, which is where the humble pallet comes into play.

Few Russian military trucks include a crane to lift heavy munitions, which are rarely carried on pallets but loaded and unloaded by hand. Plenty of ageing Soviet ZIL trucks have been seen in Ukraine.

Moving weapons and ammunition this way is cumbersome, time-consuming and potentially gives enemy surveillance a greater opportunity to detect such shipments. By contrast, the UK and US militaries palletize much of their ammunition or carry it in containers.

The Russian way of war -- as witnessed over the last three months in eastern Ukraine -- relies on huge artillery barrages to pulverize targets before moving forward. Russian military doctrine has always emphasized a massive use of artillery, MLRS and mortars. That demands constant resupply: Some analysts calculate that Russia is using at least 7,000 shells and rockets a day in Donbas, and often many more.

Serhiy Hayday, head of the Luhansk regional military administration, said Wednesday: "The Russian army does not stop shelling. However, most likely, it saves the existing stocks of shells, because their supply has been interrupted by the work of our new long-range weapons."

Ukrainian officials claim that the Russians are being thrown off-balance by their growing capability for long-range precision attacks.

In and around Melitopol, for example, the Russians have imposed restrictions on civilian movements in recent days. The area has seen at least two major strikes this month against Russian bases.

But for the Ukrainians to sustain this rate of strikes requires an unimpeded conduit of munitions from the West. The Ukrainian military is transitioning from an organization largely reliant on Soviet-era artillery and rocket systems -- with inadequate ammunition -- to using precision Western weapons with enough ammunition in a matter of months.

Also unknown is whether any of the handful of HIMARS so far shipped have been taken out by Russian fire. The Ukrainian military and defense ministries avoid providing details about their deployment.

Ryan cautions that while the HIMARS "has provided the Ukrainian Armed Forces with a new 'Long Hand' to attack the Russian invaders, there is no such thing as a silver bullet solution in war."

But US officials are confident that the accuracy of the weapon -- as well as other accurate long-range systems -- will progressively change the battlefield.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Recession risks rise: Fed daunting task</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/13/fed-inflation-recession/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/13/fed-inflation-recession/</a>
GIST	<p>The chances of a recession have gone up. Drastically.</p> <p>Wall Street is betting higher on it. Policymakers are clinching their teeth. And jittery Americans are beginning to put off big-ticket purchases.</p> <p>The latest inflation reading was supposed to offer hope that the U.S. economy had weathered the worst of the storm. But there was nothing reassuring in Wednesday's report. In fact, inflation actually got much worse in June across the economy making it even harder — and more unlikely — that the Federal Reserve can bring down prices without triggering a recession.</p> <p>Price growth surged to a new four-decade high, with inflation up to 9.1 percent for the 12 months ending in June, according to Labor Department data. That unexpectedly high reading, combined with a stronger-than-expected June jobs report, means the central bank will likely take even more aggressive action to cool the economy.</p> <p>"The odds of a recession have definitely gone up," said Rodney Ramcharan, an economics professor at the University of Southern California and former senior economist at the Federal Reserve Board. "The central</p>



bank is a powerful institution but there's no way it can carefully calibrate these interest rate increases to avoid a recession."

During the pandemic, the Fed had allowed borrowing costs to go down to close to zero, to help the economy grow during a tense time when millions of people lost their jobs all at once. Now the economy looks like its bubbling over, with prices showing no signs of easing. The Fed has already raised interest rates three times this year — most recently in June by three-quarters of a percentage point — to try to control inflation. But stubborn price increases mean the central bank has much more work to do.

Economists now expect the Fed to raise interest rates by another 0.75 percentage point later this month, and there is new talk of a full one percentage point hike, which would be the largest one-time increase since the central bank began announcing rate hikes in the early 1990s. The Fed is trying to raise the cost of borrowing for businesses and households to slow spending. Slowing spending is supposed to slow inflation.

The Fed faces a tough decision after that. If inflation continues to rise, central bankers would have to decide whether to keep raising rates and potentially halt any economic growth in the final months of 2022. In the past, the Fed has only managed to avoid a recession with these kinds of rate hikes a handful of times.

How far the Fed goes down this path will determine the likelihood of a recession.

"The Fed faces a daunting policy challenge," said Gary Stern, who was president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis from 1985 to 2009. "Inflation has turned out to not only be higher but more sustained than they expected, and there's no convincing sign that it's abating."

Essentials like fuel, food and housing have all gotten more expensive in the past year. Gas prices have nearly doubled — though they have inched down from mid-June peaks — and the cost of staples like rice, milk, butter and baby food have all risen by 12 to 16 percent.

Housing costs, meanwhile, are up nearly 6 percent and are likely to become an even bigger driver of inflation in coming months.

"Up until now, inflation reports have been disappointing but this latest one was just painful," said Ellen Gaske, an economist at PGIM Fixed Income and former senior economist at the New York Fed. "Households are going to feel this. Their wages are not keeping pace with this kind of widespread inflation."

On Wednesday, President Biden called inflation "our most pressing economic challenge" and talked about the importance of bringing down price increases. He has also said a recession is ["not inevitable."](#)

The White House has misjudged the persistence of inflation for more than a year. And now, the global economy is looking a lot rockier than it did six months ago. The World Bank warned in June that the global economy could face [several years](#) of weak growth. And recession fears are sweeping through Europe.

Canada's central bank on Wednesday raised interest rates by one percentage point in hopes of tamping down on the country's 7.7 percent increase in prices over the past year.

Wall Street is already pricing in a similar rate-hike in the United States. Financial markets recoiled following the release of the new inflation data, as investors grappled with figures suggesting that peak inflation has yet to arrive, which could prompt the Federal Reserve to push the brakes on the economy even harder.

All three major stock indexes slumped on Wednesday. Market observers will also be closely watching corporate earnings this week. The financial snapshots offer another signal as to how businesses are coping with the high-inflation environment and how the actions of the Fed are influencing market conditions. Investors will also get a glimpse of business projections looking ahead to the second half of the year, providing more guidance on the direction of the economy.

Although inflation hasn't budged — and has in fact gotten worse — some economists point to promising signs of cooling in other parts of the economy signaling that a recession isn't imminent or inevitable. Job growth, though still exceptionally strong, is slowing. Consumers are beginning to think twice about spending on goods and some services. And there are signs that higher mortgage rates are leading to a slowdown in home sales. All of these forces work to cool down the economy and could help the Fed do its job without getting too far into the restrictive area.

"The totality of the data is more reassuring: These are all parts of the economy that need to slow to bring down inflation," said Jason Furman, an economist at Harvard University and top economic adviser in the Obama White House. "I don't think it's time to start panicking yet. You should be nervous and wary, yes, but not panicking."

In Boise, Idaho, the mood among prospective home buyers began souring early this year, shortly after the Fed began talking about raising interest rates. Demand for new homes has continued to drop as mortgage rates tick up, according to Colby Henry, a loan officer at Benchmark Mortgage. Rates for a 30-year mortgage have risen from 2.9 percent to 5.3 percent in the last year, according to Freddie Mac.

"It used to be that we'd be talking to 20 people a day and they were all making offers, and now we're talking to four or five," Henry said. "There's a lot of confusion. A number of people we'd been working with were like, 'No, we're going to wait and see what happens.'"

The likeliest scenario, economists say, is several months of even higher interest rates. The federal funds rate — the overnight lending rate controlled by the central bank — is currently 1.5 to 1.75 percent, although it may have to go as high as 6 percent before it can make a dent in inflation, said Jeffrey Lacker, an economics professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and former president of the Richmond Fed.

"This is another terrible inflation report and just the latest sign that the Fed still has a long way to go," he said. "There's no way to rein in inflation without a recession, and it won't surprise me if we enter one this year."

Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell has maintained that the central bank will be able to engineer a "soft landing" — slowing the economy enough to muffle inflation without causing a full-blown downturn with massive job losses — although he has acknowledged growing concerns that it will be difficult to pull off.

"Do I still think that we can do that? I do," Powell said in a news conference earlier this month. "Events of the last few months have raised the degree of difficulty, created great challenges ... there's a much bigger chance now that it'll depend on factors that we don't control."

The inflation data released Wednesday reinforced how challenging Powell's task has become.

"I'm not sure we've ever had a soft landing — people can talk about it and they can hope for it, but in my opinion it's not going to happen," said Stern, the former Minneapolis Fed president. "I expect we will have a recession — it's likely to be relatively brief and relatively mild — but I personally doubt a significant reduction in inflation is achievable without it."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 WHO warns Covid 'nowhere near over'
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/07/13/covid-pandemic-wave-who-ba5-variants/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/07/13/covid-pandemic-wave-who-ba5-variants/</a>

GIST	<p>“The virus is running freely,” the World Health Organization warns as the latest omicron offshoots drive up coronavirus infections around the world.</p> <p>Many countries have lifted restrictions and reduced coronavirus tracking as they grapple with pandemic fatigue. But “new waves of the virus demonstrate again that covid-19 is nowhere near over,” according to WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.</p> <p>He appealed to governments Tuesday to pour efforts back into testing and improving vaccine deployment and said rising cases were straining medical systems already stretched by the pandemic.</p> <p>The WHO’s call to action echoed concerns from U.S. health officials, who urged Americans on Tuesday to take precautions against reinfection and serious illness. Biden administration officials are <a href="#">seeking to contain</a> the spread with vaccinations, antivirals and testing, as they <a href="#">develop a plan</a> to offer all adults a second booster shot.</p> <p>Federal data indicates that the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants make up about 80 percent of circulating coronavirus in the United States, where <a href="#">67 percent of people</a> have been fully vaccinated.</p> <p>Britain, which has vaccinated much of the population and <a href="#">lifted all coronavirus curbs, including masking</a> and requiring those who test positive to self-quarantine, is also facing a virus surge. In England, <a href="#">1 in 25 people</a> had covid-19 during the week ending June 29, the latest government statistics estimated.</p> <p>The country is now allowing a second booster shot for people older than 75 and others with weakened immune systems.</p> <p>A virus surge across Europe prompted health regulators on the continent to recommend a second booster for high-risk groups this week as part of efforts to fight the subvariants.</p> <p>“A new COVID-19 wave is ramping up across the European Union,” the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control said Monday in a statement. It urged governments to prepare “for a next expected wave in the autumn and winter seasons.”</p> <p>In China, the arrival of the BA.5 subvariant raised fears of a return of lockdowns in Shanghai, where many residents have just emerged from two months of home confinement.</p> <p>Health experts say the spread of the variants highlights the need to immunize populations that remain unprotected because of vaccine apathy or unequal access. More than 12 billion coronavirus shots have been administered worldwide, but in low-income countries, only about 19 percent of people have received at least one dose, according to Our World in Data.</p> <p>In Tuesday’s briefing, the WHO director general also said countries are “not effectively managing ... the expanding number of people” with long covid — which refers to ongoing or new health problems that occur at least four weeks after infection.</p> <p>While vaccines and other health tools put the world in a better position than the early pandemic days, “we should not take them for granted,” Tedros said. “As the virus pushes at us, we must push back.”</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 US: Russia forcibly deport Ukrainians</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/13/ukraine-russia-forced-deportation-antony-blinken/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/13/ukraine-russia-forced-deportation-antony-blinken/</a>
GIST	Russia has deported 900,000 to 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens from Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine in a systemic “filtration” operation, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement Wednesday, in a loud condemnation of Moscow and affirmation of claims that Ukrainian officials have levied for weeks.

Many of those “forcibly deported,” including 260,000 children, some separated from their families, have wound up in isolated regions in Russia’s far east, Blinken said.

“Reports indicate” that Russian forces have taken thousands of children from orphanages in Ukraine and placed them up for adoption in Russia, according to the statement.

Reporting by The Washington Post in March [showed](#) that Ukrainian civilians were already being deported. Some were taken to Taganrog, a Russian port city on the Sea of Azov. From there, they would be sent by train to cities and towns across Russia. In March, satellite images and videos verified by The Post showed that Russian-backed forces were beginning to build a camp in Bezymenne, in separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine.

In late June, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said that 1.2 million Ukrainians had been forcibly deported to Russia, including 240,000 children. Two thousand of the children were orphans. The head of the Russian National Defense Control Center, Mikhail Mizintsev, said 2,359,000 Ukrainian “refugees” had moved into Russia, including 371,925 children.

Last week, Courtney Austrian, the deputy chief of the U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, [said in a speech](#) that 18 “filtration camps” had been identified along both sides of the Ukraine-Russian border. With the help of proxy groups, Russian officials had set up camps in schools, sports centers and cultural institutions in Russian-occupied territories.

Blinken’s statement cites witness accounts of Russian authorities transporting tens of thousands of people to detention facilities in Donetsk, a Russian-controlled region in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow “reportedly” stored biometric and personal data of civilians and subjected them to invasive searches, according to the statement, which notes that some Ukrainians have been coerced into signing agreements to stay in Russia.

“The unlawful transfer and deportation of protected persons is a grave breach of the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#) on the protection of civilians and is a war crime,” Blinken said, drawing parallels to past Russian filtration operations in Chechnya and elsewhere.

Robert Goldman, a war crimes and human rights expert at American University, said that forced deportations on the scale Blinken describes could amount to genocidal intent.

“It just adds to the sad litany of systematic violations of the most basic prohibitions that we have in the law for things that we did not think that we would see again, since World War II, but they’re happening,” he said.

Residents of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia have warned that [history is repeating itself](#).

From 1941 to 1952, a total of half-a-million people from the Baltic states were deported to Russia. The objective of the expulsions was principally political, aimed at purging the region of anti-Soviet forces. Among the first group of people were the men of the Baltic elite, including educators, writers, lawyers and other professionals, along with their families. Later, during “Operation Priboi,” women and children were deported and sent to farms to work. Many died along the way.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Covid reinfections common not harmless
SOURCE	<a href="https://time.com/6196814/covid-19-reinfections-omicron-risks/">https://time.com/6196814/covid-19-reinfections-omicron-risks/</a>
GIST	y now, you may know—or be—someone who has had COVID-19 two, three, or even four times. Omicron and its subvariants, which are highly contagious and <a href="#">contain mutations that may allow them to evade</a> the body’s vaccine- and infection-acquired immune defenses, have made <a href="#">reinfections an unfortunate but common part of life</a> .

Experts warn that BA.5, which [currently accounts for the majority of cases in the U.S.](#), may be particularly likely to cause reinfections, even among people who have had the virus relatively recently. Scientists have similar concerns about [BA.2.75](#), another transmissible Omicron subvariant that is spreading quickly in some parts of the world, including India, but does not yet make up a significant percentage of new cases in the U.S.

How much should reinfections worry you? Here's what we know so far.

### **You may not get as sick as you did the first time**

If your body has had practice dealing with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it should perform better the next time around, ideally keeping your second illness milder.

The body mounts an immune response after either having COVID-19 or getting vaccinated against it. These defenses significantly reduce your chances of experiencing severe disease or dying if you get infected again, says Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, chief of the laboratory of infectious diseases at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. (People who are immunocompromised may not mount a robust immune response, leaving them susceptible to serious outcomes even after a prior exposure or vaccination.)

But getting infected is [not a guarantee that you won't get sick again](#) in the future, especially with BA.5 and other Omicron relatives circulating globally.

Triple-vaccinated, previously infected health care workers gained almost no immune benefits (as measured by antibodies, [T cells](#), and other immune responses) after being reinfected by Omicron, according to [a study](#) published in the journal *Science* in June. In other words, their immunity didn't exceed what they had already generated from vaccines and prior infections. People who'd been fully vaccinated but never infected did get a bit of a boost.

Another [study](#), published in *Nature* in May, found that unvaccinated people gained little lasting protection after being infected by Omicron.

"Getting an Omicron infection is not a good way of boosting your immune response," says Rosemary Boyton, co-author of the *Science* study and a professor of immunology and respiratory medicine at Imperial College London. Her study showed that infections during the first Omicron wave are "not necessarily protecting you against BA.4 and BA.5 and the subsequent strains. That may be why we're seeing people getting frequent breakthrough infections and reinfections."

### **Even mild disease carries risk**

If reinfections are likely to be mild, is it such a big deal to get sick again? It can be. A [study](#) posted online in June as a preprint (meaning it had not yet been peer-reviewed) found that reinfection adds "non-trivial risks" of death, hospitalization, and post-COVID health conditions, on top of those accumulated from an initial SARS-CoV-2 infection. Organ failure, heart disease, neurologic conditions, diabetes, and more have been [linked to SARS-CoV-2 infections](#).

Study co-author Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, an assistant professor at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, says the paper has been misinterpreted a bit; some have incorrectly assumed it means second infections are worse than primary ones. What the paper actually shows, Al-Aly says, is that additional infections come with additional risks. They may be smaller than those of a first infection, but they can pile up over time. "If your risk was X," after a first infection, after the second one "it's X plus Y," he explains. Even if a reinfection doesn't make you very sick right away, it could increase your chances of developing chronic post-COVID health issues, the paper suggests.

"Second infections are less likely [than first infections] to be severe," Cohen says. "But there can be damage even from that second infection."

### **You can get Long COVID after a reinfection**

Long COVID is one of the most feared risks of infection, and it can happen [even to fully vaccinated people who have mild cases of COVID-19](#). The latest federal data suggest about [one in five adults who catch COVID-19 will develop Long COVID](#) symptoms, which can include fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, chronic pain, and more.

Cohen says it's not clear yet whether someone is more or less likely to develop Long COVID after a second infection compared to their first, but there have been documented cases of people developing long-haul symptoms after a reinfection. "It certainly is possible," Cohen says, but there's not yet enough data to say how common that outcome is.

"You're almost rolling the dice again," Al-Aly says. "You may have been one of the lucky ones initially...but it doesn't really mean that's going to happen every time."

### **Are reinfections inevitable?**

Catching COVID-19 is always something to avoid as much as possible, using strategies like [staying up-to-date on vaccinations](#), wearing a [high-quality, well-fitting mask](#) indoors, improving indoor ventilation, and [asking everyone to take a rapid test before group gatherings](#).

But realistically, without comprehensive public-health strategies in place, and with variants like BA.5 causing new waves of disease, avoiding COVID-19 in the Omicron era is difficult for an individual to do without "living in a bubble," Al-Aly says.

Cohen says that reality underscores the importance of developing new tools, such as multi-strain vaccines that could protect against both current and future variants. Some experts are also excited by the possibility of [nasal vaccines](#), which could hopefully slow transmission by building immune reservoirs where the virus typically enters the body. Both products are currently in development, but not yet ready for public distribution.

Reducing the number of reinfections is necessary not only for individuals' health but also for public health, Boyton says. Medically vulnerable and immunocompromised people won't be safe as long as the virus is spreading widely, and everyone is at risk if it continues to mutate as it repeatedly infects large chunks of the population. "There is a danger that if you allow a virus to circulate in a vaccinated population at high transmission levels," she says, "that it can then further mutate into something that is more pathogenic."

In Boyton's opinion, the benefits of reducing transmission are great enough to justify continuing public-health measures like [masking on public transportation](#). Policymakers and individuals, she says, should be motivated to slow the virus' spread as much as possible.

"It's not a trivial illness to catch, even if you don't get hospitalized or die," she says.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Separatists hold 3<sup>rd</sup> American captive</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/third-us-national-held-captive-by-pro-russian-separatists-in-ukraine">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/third-us-national-held-captive-by-pro-russian-separatists-in-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>A third American national is being held captive by pro-Russian separatists in <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, according to his friends and family and a private volunteer group specialising in rescuing American citizens.</p> <p>Suedi Murekezi, 35, was arrested last month in Kherson, a <a href="#">Russian-occupied port city</a> in southern Ukraine where he had been living for more than two years, his brother Sele Murekezi said.</p> <p>"We are all extremely worried for his wellbeing. He is obviously in danger," he said.</p>



After having not heard from him for a month, Sele received a call from his brother in the early hours of 7 July, in which he said he was imprisoned in Donetsk, the biggest city in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic backed by [Russia](#).

Murekezi also said he was in the same jail as [Alexander Drueke and Andy Tai Ngoc Huynh](#), two American fighters captured by Russia last month.

Unlike Drueke and Huynh, Murekezi's friends and family say he did not participate in any fighting in Ukraine and moved to the country about four years ago, settling in Kherson in 2020.

On the phone, Murekezi told his brother he had been falsely accused of participation in pro-Ukrainian protests, a charge that his brother and two close friends in Kherson denied.

"They are using him as a pawn for their own propaganda purposes," said Sele Murekezi.

Kherson, the strategically important gateway to Crimea, was captured by Russian forces on 2 March. In the first weeks after the occupation, there were pro-Ukraine protests, which were soon quashed by the new military-civilian administration, with help from Russian troops.

A US state department spokesperson said the agency was "aware of reports" of Murekezi's detention but declined further comment, citing "privacy considerations". Murekezi's family said they were in daily contact with the state department about his situation.

Murekezi was born in Rwanda in 1985 but fled the country with his family after the 1994 genocide, emigrating to Minnesota. He started visiting Ukraine for business reasons in 2017 and settled there permanently in 2020.

Murekezi's friends in Kherson first noticed his disappearance on 8 June, when they saw that his car was no longer parked near his flat.

"He told us he was planning to use his car for the first time in a while in search of fuel," said Vladimir, a Kherson native who befriended Murekezi three years ago when he first visited the city.

Vladimir has since left Kherson but asked for his last name to be withheld because his family still lives there.

"We all warned him that driving was a bad idea," he said, adding that Murekezi drove an American Dodge Challenger with US licence plates. "Of course, such a car was going to attract attention from the Russian police."

Two days after his disappearance, Leo de Lange, a Dutch friend of Murekezi in Kherson, spotted him in a video circulating on separatists' Telegram channels. The clip showed a visibly distressed Murekezi in a dark room being ordered to repeat in Russian "glory to the Russian army".

Both De Lange and Vladimir said Murekezi did not participate in the pro-Ukrainian rallies that swept the city in March.

"I know for a fact that he did not go out and protest," said De Lang, who added that he used to see Murekezi weekly.

Russian prosecutors and pro-Russia separatists did not reply to requests for comment and have not spoken publicly about Murekezi.

The number of American civilians detained in occupied Ukrainian territory remains unknown.



In May, Kirillo Alexandrov, a US citizen living in Kherson, was freed by the Florida-based non-profit organisation Project Dynamo after spending more than two months in captivity. At the time, the group said they were tracking a number of cases of Americans “trapped behind enemy lines”.

“Suedi is in peril, he is in a very dangerous situation. The Donetsk People’s Republic has the death penalty and doesn’t adhere to international norms,” said Bryan Stern, a US veteran and Project Dynamo co-founder. “From what I understand, his only crime is that he is an American.”

Last month, two British men and a Moroccan national captured while fighting in the Ukrainian army [were sentenced to death](#) by separatists in Donetsk.

Drueke and Huynh, the two American fighters reportedly held with Murekezi, have not yet been sentenced. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said they would not be granted the protections afforded to prisoners of war by the Geneva conventions, claiming that they were mercenaries.

There is no evidence to suggest that Murekezi fought against Russian soldiers, and it is unlikely that he will be tried as a mercenary.

Still, his family worries that Russia will use trumped-up charges to hand him a lengthy prison sentence. His brother Sele Murekezi also expressed fear that his skin colour placed him in a particularly grave situation. “Him being a black man adds to our fears, of course. Racism can play a role,” he said.

“When he called, he told me he wasn’t tortured, but it was hard to know for sure as he was being watched during our conversation.”

Before moving to Ukraine, Murekezi spent eight years in the US air force. He left the military in 2017 and started investing in shares and cryptocurrencies, according to his family.

His interest in crypto brought him to Ukraine, said De Lange, a fellow investor in digital currencies.

“We quickly bonded over our passion for cryptocurrencies. We were both very excited about all the ambitious plans Ukraine had with crypto before the war started,” said De Lange, who spent four months in the Russian-occupied city before fleeing earlier this month to Georgia.

Prewar, Ukraine had [emerged](#) as a popular destination for cryptocurrency entrepreneurs after liberalising its crypto regulations.

“Suedi was a bitcoin maximalist,” De Lange said, a term industry insiders use for someone with strong ideological convictions about cryptocurrency’s potential.

But those close to him said that Murekezi also developed a genuine fondness for Ukraine.

“He loved how welcoming Ukraine and Ukrainians were. He often said that Kherson was his favourite city, he really liked it here,” said Vladimir.

Murekezi’s detainment gives a rare insight into life in Kherson, which has been occupied for more than four months. After Russia captured the city, Kherson was cut off from Ukrainian mobile phone and internet services, complicating contact with the outside world.

De Lange described the first weeks of the occupation as “intense” and “war-like”, with daily protests and long lines forming for food and other necessities.

Eventually, he said, life somewhat stabilised and shops reopened, with Ukrainian food products replaced by Russian ones and Russian passports handed to residents. Yet, a climate of fear persisted.

	<p>“You heard daily stories of people who organised the protests being kidnapped at night. Everyone was afraid to talk to each other. It was a very grim atmosphere,” he said.</p> <p>Vladimir similarly described how Kherson became dominated by uncertainty and dread.</p> <p>He recalled how shortly after Murekezi disappeared, he went to the pro-Russia military-civilian administration in Kherson to ask for his friend’s release.</p> <p>“I was severely threatened and shouted at, and my phone was searched,” Vladimir said. “They barked at me, asking why I cared about ‘some American’.”</p> <p>The incident profoundly affected Vladimir, he said, and he soon decided to flee Kherson, fearing that his questions had raised suspicion among the pro-Russian authorities.</p> <p>But despite the dangers that the Russian occupation entailed, friends say Murekezi had not wanted to leave the city and remained in an upbeat mood.</p> <p>“He and I would play basketball and chess a few times a week, and he seemed to be doing well,” said De Lange, who remembered how his friend talked “a lot” about opening up a new cafe in Kherson that would accept cryptocurrencies.</p> <p>“In the end, I think he was way too naive about the dangers that he was facing as a black American in Kherson.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Turkey: Ukraine, Russia grain export deal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/turkey-announces-deal-with-ukraine-russia-and-un-aimed-at-resuming-grain-exports">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/turkey-announces-deal-with-ukraine-russia-and-un-aimed-at-resuming-grain-exports</a>
GIST	<p>Turkey has announced a deal with Ukraine, Russia and the UN aimed at resuming Ukrainian grain exports blocked by Russia, raising prospects for an end to a standoff that has <a href="#">exposed millions to the risk of starvation</a>.</p> <p>Turkey’s defence minister, Hulusi Akar, said on Wednesday that the deal would be signed when the parties meet again next week and would include joint controls for checking grains in ports and <a href="#">Turkey</a> ensuring the safety of Black Sea export routes for Ukrainian grain.</p> <p>Turkey would also set up a coordination centre with <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, Russia and the UN for grain exports, Akar said. Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, wrote on Twitter: “Its task will be to carry out general monitoring and coordination of safe navigation in the Black Sea.”</p> <p>In his daily address, Zelenskiy, Ukraine’s president, said: “We are indeed making significant efforts to restore the supply of food to the world market. And I am grateful to the United Nations and Turkey for their respective efforts.”</p> <p>Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia in February, had said earlier that a deal appeared “two steps away” as Turkey hosted the four-way talks in Istanbul.</p> <p>The UN secretary general, António Guterres, said a “critical step forward” had been made toward reviving Ukrainian grain exports but cautioned that “more technical work will now be needed to materialise today’s progress”.</p> <p>“Today is an important and substantive step, a step on the way to a comprehensive agreement.” Ukraine and Russia had shown they could talk, but “for peace we still have a long way to go,” he told reporters in New York.</p>

There was no immediate comment from Ukraine or Russia, both among the world's largest grain exporters.

Russia's Interfax news agency quoted Pyotr Ilyichev, head of the international organisations department at Russia's foreign ministry, earlier on Wednesday as saying Russia wanted to control and inspect vessels itself to rule out arms smuggling.

Several Ukrainian cities meanwhile reported heavy Russian shelling and, while not linking a grain deal to progress in talks to end the war, Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, was downbeat on prospects for peace.

More than 20m tonnes of Ukrainian grain are stuck in silos at the Black Sea port of Odesa and dozens of ships have been stranded due to Russia's blockade, part of what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine but which Kyiv and the west say is an unjustified war of aggression.

The talks, in Istanbul between Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish and UN officials, took place behind closed doors at an undisclosed location.

Igor Konashenkov, a spokesperson for Russia's defence ministry, said Moscow had put forward proposals to resolve the grain issue as soon as possible.

Turkey published a photograph of the meeting showing the Russian and Ukrainian delegations sitting opposite each other looking stony-faced.

Apart from being major global wheat suppliers, Russia is also a large fertiliser exporter and Ukraine a significant producer of corn and sunflower oil. Clinching a deal to unblock exports is seen as vital for food security, notably among developing nations, and for stabilising markets.

Ukrainian officials said there had been sustained Russian shelling across Donetsk province, which Moscow aims to capture to complete its seizure of the industrialised Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

Russian state news agency Tass on Wednesday quoted a separatist official, Vitaly Kiselyov, as saying Russian and proxy forces had entered the town of Siversk in Donetsk province and could take it in a couple of days. It was not clear what that assertion was based on.

In their evening briefing note, Ukraine's armed forces said Russia had not conducted any new assaults on the frontline that includes Siversk, but that the town had been fired on by artillery.

Russia also struck 28 settlements in the Mykolaiv region bordering the Black Sea, killing at least five civilians, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office.

Russia, which says it does not target civilians, said on Wednesday it had shot down four Ukrainian military jets, an assertion the Ukrainian air force dismissed as propaganda.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield accounts.

As the Istanbul talks got under way, Kuleba reaffirmed Ukraine's overall stance in the war, telling a briefing there were still no peace talks with Moscow and no territory would be ceded to Russia under any future deal.

Ukraine and the West have accused Russia of exacerbating a global food crisis and fuelling inflation by complicating attempts to supply poorer nations with grain.

Moscow has blamed Ukraine, accusing it of refusing to remove mines that it scattered around its coastline to protect itself from Russia's attack and that represent a threat to shipping.

	<p>Russia has also lashed out at the West for imposing sanctions on a range of sectors that make it harder for Russia to fund and insure its own maritime freight services.</p> <p>Diplomats say details of the plan under discussion at Wednesday’s talks included an idea for Ukrainian vessels to guide grain ships in and out through mined port waters; Russia agreeing to a truce while shipments move; and Turkey – supported by the UN – inspecting ships to allay Russian fears of weapons smuggling.</p> <p>Ilyichev said Russia was ready to facilitate the navigation of foreign commercial vessels to export Ukrainian grain.</p> <p>Russian news agency RIA quoted an unnamed diplomatic source as saying Russia’s demands included the removal of “obstacles to exports” created by western sanctions, citing the areas “of shipping insurance, logistics, transportation services and banking operations”.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 London emergency response to heatwave</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/13/met-office-extends-danger-to-life-warning-for-heatwave-in-england-and-wales">https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/13/met-office-extends-danger-to-life-warning-for-heatwave-in-england-and-wales</a>
GIST	<p>The London mayor, Sadiq Khan, has triggered a severe weather emergency response in the capital – a move typically activated in winter.</p> <p>City Hall has written to all London boroughs and rough sleeping services to ask them to conduct welfare checks on vulnerable people, including rough sleepers, and to provide sunscreen, water and information about staying safe in the high temperatures.</p> <p>Khan’s decision was taken shortly after the Met Office extended its danger-to-life warning for a heatwave that is due to hit much of <a href="#">England</a> and Wales at the weekend.</p> <p>The warning for extreme heat is in place from Sunday until the end of Tuesday, with the hot spell expected to peak on Monday or Tuesday.</p> <p>Announcing the move, Khan said: “This ongoing heatwave could be dangerous for anyone, but for people sleeping rough, there are additional risks.</p> <p>“Across the capital, we are taking action to assist those forced to sleep rough in these extremely high temperatures, by increasing welfare checks, providing plenty of water and sunscreen, and ensuring people sleeping rough know where to access cool spaces and water fountains.”</p> <p>Widespread disruption – including road closures and cancellations and delays to rail and air travel – are also possible, as temperatures across England and Wales are predicted to soar into the mid-30Cs and above.</p> <p>Forecasters believe there is a 30% chance that the mercury could pass the UK record of 38.7C (101.7F), set in Cambridge in 2019.</p> <p>The Met Office said: “Population-wide adverse health effects are likely to be experienced, not limited to those most vulnerable to extreme heat, leading to potential serious illness or danger to life.”</p> <p>The heatwave is a result of hot air flowing to the UK from continental Europe. Heatwaves have been made hotter, longer and more frequent by climate breakdown, and experts have warned of the need to adapt homes and cities in the UK for a future of more intense – and deadly – summer heat.</p> <p>Dr Mark McCarthy, the head of the Met Office National Climate Information Centre, said: “The highest temperatures experienced in the UK tend to occur when our weather is influenced by air masses from</p>

continental Europe or north Africa, as it will be at the weekend. There is already a strongly embedded warming due to climate change across the continent that is increasing the likelihood of challenging the existing UK temperature record.”

Ambulance services are already on the highest level of alert as difficulties with the hot weather combine with Covid absences among staff and delays handing patients over to A&E.

London ambulance service urged the public to help by only calling 999 in the event of a life-threatening emergency, keeping hydrated and staying out of the sun during the hottest periods of the day.

The Royal Life Saving Society UK warned people about the dangers of trying to cool off in lakes, quarries, rivers and other waterways.

Hot weather can put a strain on the heart and lungs, with older people, those with pre-existing health conditions and young children particularly at risk. It can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion or even heatstroke, and affect the ability to work or concentrate.

People are being encouraged to keep their homes cool by closing blinds or curtains and making sure that bedrooms are well ventilated at night.

In some areas, the heatwave comes after months of below-average rainfall, and water companies are urging households to save water, as demand surges in the face of the high temperatures.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Biden commits to Israel's security</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/biden-commits-to-israels-security-as-he-embarks-on-middle-east-tour">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/biden-commits-to-israels-security-as-he-embarks-on-middle-east-tour</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Joe Biden</a> has said that the US is committed to <a href="#">Israel's</a> security on arriving in Tel Aviv for the first leg of a three-day visit to the Middle East, a trip focused on deepening the majority Jewish state's ties with the Arab world as the region faces a common foe in <a href="#">Iran</a>.</p> <p>The US leader was greeted by the Israeli president, Isaac Herzog and <a href="#">caretaker prime minister, Yair Lapid</a> on Air Force One's arrival at Ben Gurion airport on Wednesday afternoon. He opted for fist-bumping rather than shaking hands with Israeli officials during the red carpet welcome, over what the White House said was concern over rising Covid cases.</p> <p>Ahead of Biden's trip, senior Israeli officials briefed reporters that the two countries will issue a broad-ranging communique titled the "Jerusalem Declaration", which will take a tough stance on Iran's nuclear programme, and reaffirm Israel's right to defend itself.</p> <p>In his opening remarks, Biden recalled that his first visit to the country had been as a young senator in 1973, just a few weeks before the Yom Kippur war with Egypt and Syria broke out. At that time, Israel and imperial Iran were still allies, and Egypt and Jordan were still hostile to the majority Jewish state.</p> <p>"We'll continue to advance Israel's integration into the region and the relationship between the US and Israel is deeper and stronger in my view than it's ever been," the president said.</p> <p>On leaving Israel, Air Force One will make a first direct flight from Tel Aviv to <a href="#">Saudi Arabia</a> amid efforts to build a relationship between the Jewish state and the conservative Gulf kingdom, which does not officially recognise Israel's existence.</p> <p>For Biden's 10th trip, and first as president, Israel is enjoying unprecedentedly positive relations with Arab countries: the <a href="#">Abraham Accords</a>, Donald Trump's major foreign policy achievement, normalised relations with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan two years ago.</p>

Like Israel, [Saudi Arabia](#) – the Sunni Muslim world’s geopolitical linchpin – fears the growing drone and missile capabilities of Iran and its proxies around the region.

Calling Biden’s visit a “journey of peace”, Herzog said: “Today, winds of peace are blowing from north Africa across the Mediterranean to the Gulf ... from the Holy Land to the Hejaz.”

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process, however, remains moribund. At the opening ceremony, Biden said he believed that a two-state solution is “the best way to ensure the future meaningful measure of freedom, prosperity and democracy for Israelis and Palestinians”, but that he knew it is “not in the near term”.

He will travel to Bethlehem in the occupied [Palestinian territories](#) to meet with Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, on Friday. Palestinian leaders have been angered by what they say is Washington’s failure to curb Israeli settlement building, as well as the administration’s unfulfilled promise to reopen a US consulate to the Palestinians in Jerusalem after Trump recognised the divided city as Israel’s capital. Biden has not reversed that decision.

The US president has also sidestepped a request to meet from the family of Palestinian-American journalist [Shireen Abu Aqleh](#), who was most likely killed as the result of Israeli sniper fire in May. The family – which accused Biden’s administration of siding with Israel after the state department said it would not push Israel to pursue a criminal investigation – has instead been invited for talks in Washington.

On Wednesday, Biden is scheduled to inspect Israel’s new Iron Beam anti-drone laser technology and visit Yad Vashem, the country’s official Holocaust memorial. He will hold one-on-one meetings with Lapid and Herzog on Thursday, as well as with Israel’s former longtime prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), who is seeking a return to office in the country’s fifth election in less than four years this November.

Biden will also attend the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah Games, a sporting tournament for Israeli and Jewish athletes from around the world, on Thursday evening.

The president’s stops in Israel and the [Palestinian territories](#) are widely viewed as of secondary importance to his trip to the Saudi city of Jeddah on Friday.

Biden called the kingdom a “pariah” over the murder of dissident journalist [Jamal Khashoggi](#) in 2018, but has been forced to re-engage with the Saudi royal family as part of efforts to stabilise oil markets shaken by the war in Ukraine, and stop the Gulf state’s drift towards China and Russia’s spheres of influence.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Euro dips below parity against the dollar</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/euro-dips-below-parity-against-dollar-for-first-time-since-2002">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/13/euro-dips-below-parity-against-dollar-for-first-time-since-2002</a>
GIST	<p>The euro dipped below parity against the dollar on Wednesday for the first time in almost two decades, as growing concern about rising recession risks in the eurozone continued to batter the currency.</p> <p>The European single currency started this year on a strong note, given a post-pandemic economic recovery. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, surging European gas prices and fears that Moscow could cut off supplies further has raised the spectre of recession and hurt the euro.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the safe-haven dollar has benefited from heightened global uncertainty and the monetary policy stance taken by the US central bank, the Federal Reserve, which has been aggressive in raising rates.</p>

The euro tanked as much as 0.4% to a low of \$0.9998 in the early afternoon, its lowest level since December 2002. It was last down 0.1% on the day at \$1.005 and has lost more than 10% so far this year.

“Gas rationing, stagflation, an expected recession, they are all good reasons to be bearish on the euro,” said Stuart Cole, the head macro economist at Equiti Capital in London, before the euro crossed that threshold.

He added that these factors would make it harder for the European Central Bank (ECB) to hike interest rates, further widening the interest-rate differential with the US.

Since becoming freely available in 1999, the single currency has spent very little time below parity. The last time it did so was between 1999 and 2002, when it sank to a record low of \$0.82 in October 2000.

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Within its relatively short history, the euro has become the second most sought-after currency in global foreign exchange reserves and daily turnover in the euro/dollar is the highest among currencies in the global \$6.6tn-a-day market.

The euro’s slide is a headache for the ECB. Allowing the currency to fall only fuels the record-high inflation it is battling to contain. But trying to shore it up with higher interest rates could exacerbate recession risks.

The ECB has so far played down the issue, arguing that it has no exchange rate target. Also when weighed against its trade partners’ currencies, the euro is down only 3.6% this year.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 New Zealand confronts omicron wave</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/new-zealand-free-masks-covid-rapid-antigen-tests-omicron-wave">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/new-zealand-free-masks-covid-rapid-antigen-tests-omicron-wave</a>
GIST	<p>New Zealand will make medical masks and rapid antigen tests free to access, the government has announced, as the country fights a growing wave of Omicron infections.</p> <p>The slate of new measures announced today include widening access to antiviral drugs to anyone over 75, making free medical masks available, and providing packs of free rapid antigen tests (RATs) even if people are not experiencing symptoms.</p> <p>Previously, people had to have been exposed or symptomatic to be eligible for the tests. The expansion of access to antivirals means about 10% of the population will be eligible, compared to 2% previously. The free mask measures will cover N-95 or P2 masks for anyone considered clinically vulnerable, and standard medical masks for others.</p> <p>Covid response minister Ayesha Verrall said these were “the most effective measures we have. They are simple, but if we all do them, we can lessen our illness burden and the burden on our health system.”</p> <p>RATs and masks will be available from community providers, including marae, testing stations, local pharmacies and others.</p> <p>The measures come as New Zealand reckons with a growing second wave of Omicron infections. On Thursday, New Zealand reported 11,382 cases, 23 deaths, and 765 people in hospital with Covid-19 – and a rising seven-day average of all three metrics.</p> <p>The number of people in hospital is likely a particular concern for the government, as it comes amid an already-pressured winter season, with health systems struggling to cope with an influx of winter illnesses.</p>



	<p>The director general of health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, said if the current trajectory continued unchecked, government modelling projected it would peak at about 1,200 hospitalisations a day. “You’ll all be aware of the pressure our hospitals, indeed our wider health system ... are under,” he said. “If everyone does their bit, we will get through winter.”</p> <p>Earlier in the week, 923 doctors in GP clinics and hospitals signed an open letter to the government saying the country was “at risk of a catastrophic collapse of the healthcare workforce”.</p> <p>In a survey of doctors conducted by the New Zealand Women in Medicine Trust, almost all respondents said there was either definitely (93.5%) or probably (6.3%) a crisis in the health workforce.</p> <p>The growing numbers of hospitalisations are partly a result of immunity waning from boosters, the spread of more infectious variants, and more infections among older cohorts, who are more likely to experience serious or life-threatening illness. The infection rates for those aged 70 and over are far higher now than they were in New Zealand’s first Omicron wave, in March.</p> <p>With the latest round of measures, the government hopes to ease the spike in infections and hospitalisations, without bringing in harsher measures – such as school closures, vaccination requirements or limits on gatherings – for which there may be little political support.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Ukraine strike shows impact new weapons</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-strike-on-russian-air-defense-unit-shows-impact-of-new-weapons-from-west-11657708988?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos2">https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-strike-on-russian-air-defense-unit-shows-impact-of-new-weapons-from-west-11657708988?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos2</a>
GIST	<p>Ukrainian forces struck an air-defense system in Russian-occupied territory in the east of the country late Tuesday, in the latest sign of how <a href="#">long-range artillery</a> sent by the West is shifting the war’s calculus.</p> <p>Russian state news agencies reported that Ukrainian forces had launched a strike on an air-defense system protecting the skies over Luhansk, the capital of one of two Russian-created statelets in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas area.</p> <p>The strike is the latest in a series that Ukraine has conducted against high-value targets <a href="#">such as ammunition depots</a> and command posts since multiple-launch rocket systems known as Himars began arriving from the U.S. last month.</p> <p>“The occupiers have already felt very well what modern artillery is, and they will not have a safe rear anywhere on our land,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a video address overnight.</p> <p>Footage posted on social media by residents of Luhansk late Tuesday showed a large explosion. Russian military correspondents said on social media that an ammunition dump in Luhansk’s industrial area had been hit.</p> <p>“The armed forces of Ukraine launched a massive attack on the military air-defense unit, which ensures the security of the city of Luhansk,” said Andriy Marochko, a spokesman for the self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic people’s militia.</p> <p>The Luhansk People’s Republic later said nine missiles had been fired at Luhansk from American-made Himars.</p> <p>Russian forces claimed control over the whole of the Luhansk region earlier this month after weeks of grinding battle that has taken a heavy toll on both sides.</p> <p>Serhiy Haidai, the exiled governor of Luhansk, said strikes on Russian ammunition depots had disrupted supplies, noting an increase in the activity of Russian subversion and reconnaissance groups probing Ukrainian lines for weak spots.</p>

At the same time, Russia's military has stepped up missile strikes on positions far from the front lines.

The death toll from [a Russian strike on a residential building](#) in Chasiv Yar over the weekend rose to 48, including a child, Mr. Zelensky said in his nightly address Wednesday. Nine people [were pulled out of the rubble alive](#), he said.

Five civilians were killed in Russian artillery strikes on the southern region of Mykolaiv on Wednesday, said Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office. He added that a hospital and residential buildings were damaged.

Russia also fired two missiles at the city of Zaporizhzhia in southeastern Ukraine, according to the regional military administration.

Russian troops shelled the Nikopol district of Dnipropetrovsk overnight using multiple-launch rocket systems, according to Ukrainian official Valentyn Reznichenko.

Since Russia [took over Luhansk](#), it has targeted the Donetsk region, part of which is already controlled by Russia and separatist forces. Capturing the rest of the region would give Moscow full control of the Donbas area, which the Kremlin made its priority after pulling its forces out of central Ukraine in late March.

"In Donbas, offensive attempts do not stop, the situation there does not get easier, and the losses do not get smaller," Mr. Zelensky said.

The Russia-backed head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, Denis Pushilin, said Wednesday that Russian and separatist forces were progressing toward the towns of Siversk and Soledar, according to Russian state news agency TASS. The towns lie between Severodonetsk, which Russia [captured late last month](#), and the city of Slovyansk, which is one of Moscow's next targets, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank. Later Wednesday, a separatist official told TASS that the forces had entered the town limits of Soledar.

Mr. Pushilin also said that more than 100 cases of captured Ukrainian fighters are ready to be brought to court. Some of the cases would be heard by a court, others by tribunal, he said.

Last month, a court in the Donetsk People's Republic sentenced three foreign fighters—two from the U.K., both of whom had lived for years in Ukraine before the conflict, and one from Morocco, who has Ukrainian nationality—to death, accusing them of working as mercenaries.

Mr. Pushilin said that the three men—Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner of the U.K. and Morocco-born Brahim Saadoun—had appealed their sentences but would face death by firing squad if their appeals are turned down.

Later Wednesday afternoon, TASS reported that North Korea had recognized the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, making it the third country to do so after Russia and Syria.

"The bilateral partnership will increase the geography of trade for our countries' businesses," Mr. Pushilin said, according to TASS.

After the announcement, Ukraine severed diplomatic ties with North Korea over the move.

"We view this decision as an attempt by Pyongyang to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

In Istanbul, officials from Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the United Nations held talks on a proposal to export millions of tons of grain that have been trapped in Ukraine by Russia's invasion.

The meeting among military officials from the three countries represented the first direct talks between Russia and Ukraine over a proposed corridor that would move grain on ships out through the Black Sea.

Also Wednesday, the European Commission issued new guidance on implementing sanctions to try to defuse tensions with Moscow over the blocking of some Russian goods from entering the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, located between Poland and Lithuania along the Baltic Sea.

The guidance doesn't eliminate sanctions for goods passing through EU territory from Russia to Kaliningrad, but seeks to smooth the passage of goods by allowing some sanctioned goods sent by rail to be waved through.

The Commission said that this exemption, which doesn't include military or dual-use goods, should apply as long as transit volumes by rail remain within the historical average of the past three years. The EU countries bordering Kaliningrad—Poland and Lithuania—are supposed to ensure that is the case.

Some EU capitals, including Germany's, were concerned that Lithuania's enforcement of the sanction could trigger a dangerous escalation from the Kremlin, which has accused the Baltic country of imposing a blockade at Kaliningrad.

The new guidance won't eliminate the need for Lithuania to carry out checks on goods but it could allow the two-way trade flows between Russia and Kaliningrad to face fewer hurdles.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova in a statement described the European Commission's guidance as a "display of common sense." But she added that Moscow still has questions about the document's contents and would closely monitor their implementation.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 IMF agrees to bailout Pakistan: \$4B lifeline</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/pakistan-reaches-agreement-with-imf-for-4-billion-lifeline-11657783994?mod=hp_listb_pos2">https://www.wsj.com/articles/pakistan-reaches-agreement-with-imf-for-4-billion-lifeline-11657783994?mod=hp_listb_pos2</a>
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—The International Monetary Fund agreed to a bailout of Pakistan, providing a financial lifeline <a href="#">as emerging markets strain</a> under pressure from a global price shock rippling out from the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The IMF said in a statement late Wednesday it would provide Pakistan with \$4 billion over the next year, starting with an initial \$1.2 billion, once its board formally approves the agreement worked out with Pakistani officials over weeks of negotiations. Foreign-exchange reserves held by Pakistan's central bank have depleted in recent weeks to cover less than two months' worth of exports, largely closing off Pakistan's prospects of tapping international financial markets.</p> <p>The staff-level agreement with the IMF is key to the plan of the new government, which came to power in April, to stabilize the economy and avoid the fate of Sri Lanka, a fellow South Asian nation in financial meltdown. Sri Lanka, which <a href="#">approached the IMF late in its crisis</a>, is now in talks for a bailout.</p> <p>Pakistan's reserves were left far short of foreign loan repayments due this year. Like other developing countries, Pakistan struggled to pay for fuel imports as the Russian invasion of Ukraine drove up the price of oil.</p> <p>"Pakistan is at a challenging economic juncture. A difficult external environment combined with procyclical domestic policies fueled domestic demand to unsustainable levels," said Nathan Porter, the IMF official who led the negotiations with Pakistan.</p> <p>Key to the deal was Islamabad's decision in June to end <a href="#">a \$600-million-a-month subsidy</a>, which cushioned gasoline prices for consumers, a painful political compromise for a new government. The</p>

	<p>IMF had said that subsidy was unsustainable and that the demand for gasoline would only be curbed once the public had to pay the market price.</p> <p>Pakistan came close to default in recent weeks, said Pakistan's finance minister, Miftah Ismail. "We've been willing to sacrifice our political capital to get this deal done," Mr. Ismail said in an interview.</p> <p>More important than the money itself is that it opens the door for other multilateral lenders like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, as well as bilateral loans from rich allies such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, Pakistani officials say.</p> <p>The annual rate of inflation hit 21% in June, driven by the soaring cost of transport and food, official figures show. The central bank raised the interest rate by 1.25 percentage points this month to 15%, the latest in a series of rate increases.</p> <p>China, a close ally, already provided a \$2.3 billion loan in June to shore up Pakistan's foreign-currency reserves.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 EU hikes inflation forecast, cuts growth</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.marketwatch.com/story/eu-raises-eurozone-inflation-forecasts-cuts-growth-outlook-due-to-ukraine-war-271657789747?mod=hp_minor_pos25&amp;adobe_mc=MCMID%3D47249930346723645700304474077629848658%7CMCORGID%3DCB68E4BA55144CAA0A4C98A5%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1657792615">https://www.marketwatch.com/story/eu-raises-eurozone-inflation-forecasts-cuts-growth-outlook-due-to-ukraine-war-271657789747?mod=hp_minor_pos25&amp;adobe_mc=MCMID%3D47249930346723645700304474077629848658%7CMCORGID%3DCB68E4BA55144CAA0A4C98A5%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1657792615</a>
GIST	<p>The European Commission has raised its inflation forecasts for the eurozone considerably and has slashed its 2023 growth forecast for the bloc as Russia's war against Ukraine takes its toll on the economy.</p> <p>Following the revision, the European Commission expects eurozone inflation at 7.6% in 2022, up from its previous forecast of 6.1% published in May. Annual average inflation is projected to peak at historical highs in 2022, according to the Commission's forecasts. For 2023, eurozone inflation is forecast at 4.0%, up from 2.7% in the Spring forecasts.</p> <p>"Moscow's actions are disrupting energy and grain supplies, pushing up prices and weakening confidence," European Commissioner for Economy Paolo Gentiloni said.</p> <p>Russia's invasion of Ukraine has put additional upward pressures on energy and food prices, which are feeding into global inflationary pressures, eroding the purchasing power of households and triggering a faster monetary policy response than previously assumed, the European Commission said.</p> <p>"In view of high inflation and tightening financing conditions, it will be important to find the right balance between moving towards a more prudent fiscal stance and protecting the most vulnerable," EU Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis said.</p> <p>The eurozone economy remains particularly vulnerable to developments in energy markets due to its high reliance on Russian fossil fuels, the European Commission said.</p> <p>Mr. Dombrovskis is urging the EU to reduce its dependence on Russian fossil fuels. "Russia's war against Ukraine continues to cast a long shadow over Europe and our economy," he said.</p> <p>Economic activity in the remainder of the year is expected to be subdued, notwithstanding a promising summer tourism season, the European Commission forecasts. Quarterly economic growth is expected to gather momentum in 2023 on the back of a resilient labor market, moderating inflation, support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and a large amount of excess savings.</p>

	<p>Gross domestic product in the 19-member eurozone is projected to grow 2.6% in 2022, the EU said in its quarterly report. It previously forecast 2.7% growth for the year in May. The economy is expected to expand 1.4% in 2023, weaker than the 2.3% previously expected.</p> <p>“With the course of the war and the reliability of gas supplies unknown, this forecast is subject to high uncertainty and downside risks,” Mr. Gentiloni warned.</p> <p>Fresh increases in gas prices could further drive up inflation and stifle growth, the European Commission said.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Downtown Seattle reacts SPD hiring plan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/downtown-businesses-react-to-spd-hiring-plan">https://komonews.com/news/local/downtown-businesses-react-to-spd-hiring-plan</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Business owners in the downtown core of Seattle say the push to hire more officers can't come soon enough. They've been dealing with increasing crime and longer response times for years.</p> <p>Their first reaction was excitement about the potential \$2 million investment for more officers, announced by Mayor Bruce Harrell and Interim Chief Adrian Diaz.</p> <p>The Seattle Shirt Company off First and Pike Street has been taking measures for years to keep customers and employees safe. General Manager Kari Hicks believes the mayor's plan is a strong next step in boosting public safety.</p> <p>“We have now installed bars on our windows and shatter-proof riot glass and we have a security guard. These are things that we didn't do five years ago,” Hicks explained. “We've had three break-ins within a week People have said, ‘I've witnessed a shooting or I saw someone with a gun.’ We've definitely lost employees because of that.”</p> <p>It's why she wasn't surprised when Starbucks this week announced it's closing multiple locations, including in downtown.</p> <p>“I don't think they're wrong. We have definitely thought as a store, like, ‘Is this the place we want to be?’” she asked.</p> <p>The Downtown Seattle Association in a statement tells KOMO businesses want faster police response times, more officers, help for people in need and safer work environments.</p> <p>“If the police can't respond, we kind of have to take care of ourselves,” Hicks added.</p> <p>Harrel and Diaz announced a proposal to recruit and retain officers with competitive incentives. “SPD needs to keep the officers we have and hire at least 500 more over the next five years,” Interim Chief Diaz explained.</p> <p>“I hope that's enough,” Hicks stated.</p> <p>Hicks, who has three stores in downtown, said the Harrell administration has helped with public safety response this year with the police precinct captain meeting with downtown businesses every other week. But, she says responses and response times could improve.</p> <p>She says it's about protecting people and businesses -- and maintaining the workforce.</p> <p>DSA provided the following statement in response to the proposal announced Wednesday:</p> <p><i>“We applaud Mayor Harrell's commitment to building a Seattle Police Department more commensurate with our city's population and its challenges. This plan is a thoughtful approach aimed at ensuring Seattle</i></p>

	<i>has the right officers, and not just a deeper roster. As we see continued growth in downtown, with more residents, events, visitors and the return of workers, a safe environment is critical. This plan will get us closer to faster response times and more help for people who need it. We've seen recent progress on public safety in downtown, and we'll continue to work with city leaders to create a vibrant, welcoming downtown for all. " – Downtown Seattle Association</i>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Spokane homeless survey count: 1,757</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/homeless/point-in-time-homelessness-spokane/293-9a8174f5-95a0-4054-81ff-dfb992c0982f">https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/homeless/point-in-time-homelessness-spokane/293-9a8174f5-95a0-4054-81ff-dfb992c0982f</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — More than 1,700 homeless individuals were counted in Spokane for the "<a href="#">Point in Time</a>" survey, asking homeless individuals where they were sleeping on the night of February 24. The count provides a snapshot of our region's homeless crisis.</p> <p>The annual count, which was canceled in 2021 due to the pandemic, also asks people where they lived before they became homeless, how they ended up in their position and what services they need to recover.</p> <p>Those results were shared Wednesday at a presentation in the downtown library. A total of 1,757 people were counted this year, 198 more than in 2020.</p> <p>Of those counted this year, 53% said they were staying in emergency or transitional shelters. 823 people, or 46%, said they were sleeping on the street.</p> <p>They were asked what kept them from using a shelter.</p> <p>"What we found is that the top reason cited was safety or fear of violence, followed by privacy and anxiety," one presenter said.</p> <p>The survey also asked people the last place they lived before becoming homeless. 74% said they lived either in Spokane or the county. The majority had a local address for 10 or more years.</p> <p>One of the most important questions asked how people became homeless in the first place and what they need the most</p> <p>"What are the primary reasons why you became homeless? Number one: lack of affordable housing. They're telling us. What's missing from the current shelter system? Access to permanent housing. What services are you most in need of? Number one: housing," one presenter said.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Gas prices down sharply; but will it last?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/business/energy-environment/gas-prices-inflation.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/business/energy-environment/gas-prices-inflation.html</a>
GIST	<p>HOUSTON — Gasoline prices, on an upward tear for months, have reversed course in recent weeks, giving consumers a welcome break.</p> <p>Gasoline was a major reason that U.S. consumer prices were 9.1 percent higher in June than a year earlier, the biggest annual increase in four decades. But now gas prices have declined 28 days in a row, the longest decline since the collapse in energy demand in early 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic paralyzed the economy. Energy analysts say American consumers are spending \$140 million less on gasoline daily than they were a month ago.</p> <p>The trend could easily reverse, especially if a hurricane knocks out a refinery on the Gulf Coast, since global oil supplies remain fairly tight. But for the moment, the nation's inventories are slowly growing, in part because of continuing releases of oil by the government from its strategic oil reserves and reduced consumption.</p>



The [average national price per gallon of regular gasoline](#) on Wednesday was \$4.63, a drop of more than 2 cents from Tuesday, according to the AAA auto club. Prices have fallen 15 cents over the last week and 38 cents from four weeks ago, when the average price climbed to just over \$5 a gallon.

The descent has been particularly sharp in Texas, Ohio, Illinois and California, all economically important states, where prices have fallen by 16 cents or more over the last week.

President Biden was quick to herald the reduction in gas prices, since their rise has been a political hazard for him.

“In the past 30 days, the average price of gas has dropped by 40 cents a gallon,” [he said on Twitter](#). “That’s breathing room for American families.” Noting that oil prices had declined more rapidly than fuel prices, [he urged oil companies](#) to pass on their savings to consumers.

Gasoline prices are particularly important for lower-income families, who generally drive longer distances to work and own older, less efficient vehicles. But prices at the pump also frame consumers’ perceptions of inflation more widely because they observe the ups and downs on street corners every day.

Drivers are beginning to notice the difference, and like what they see.

“There’s always the fear that prices will rise but never fall,” said Melanie Wilson-Lawson, a health science professor, as she filled up her tank at a gas station outside Houston. “But I see a significant difference now. It’s huge.” That helps ease her financial insecurity, which had prompted her to cut back on dining out in recent weeks.

Ms. Wilson-Lawson said she hoped [Mr. Biden’s discussions on his current trip to the Middle East](#) would prompt oil producers to increase supplies and bring down prices. But how much more Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern nations can produce, even if they want to, is questionable. Production in several countries, especially Libya, has been stymied by political upheaval.

Fuel affects the prices of all goods that are shipped, particularly food. Profits of farmers, construction companies and airlines depend heavily on fuel costs, particularly diesel and jet fuel, which are declining but at a slower pace than gasoline. The national average price for diesel, \$5.61 a gallon, is 16 cents lower than it was a month ago.

The 3 percent decline for diesel compares with 7 percent for gasoline. Wholesale jet fuel prices, which do not include taxes like other fuels, are down roughly 11 percent over the last month, compared with 24 percent for wholesale gasoline prices. A major reason for the slower decline in domestic diesel prices is a large increase in exports to Europe to compensate for reduced supplies from Russia since its February invasion of Ukraine. Imports to the United States have shrunk to a trickle since the global diesel market tightened.

The fall in prices at the pump has followed a slump in global oil prices, which have been [dropping over the last month](#) amid growing signs that the world economy is slowing.

Fears that tightening Western sanctions on Russia would drastically reduce global oil inventories have proved overblown since Moscow [succeeded in replacing European markets](#) with sales to China, India and South America. In the meantime, expectations that the economy of China, the biggest importer of crude, would pick up have also been unfulfilled because of lockdowns in important cities in response to continuing surges of Covid-19.

Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, a Boston company that tracks fuel prices, said the trend of lower gasoline prices could continue for a fifth week as long as oil prices — which have fallen below \$100 a barrel — did not surge above \$105.



“We’re not completely out of the woods yet,” Mr. De Haan said. “There remains the risk of a spike in prices that could send us to new record levels in August should any disruptions occur. It could be a wild ride, but for now, the plummet at the pump shall continue.”

The fluctuation of gasoline prices typically follows oil prices by roughly a week, because petroleum needs to be processed and refined before it reaches gas stations, which base their retail prices on the wholesale price.

Oil prices have been particularly volatile lately. They plunged more than 7 percent on Tuesday and were slightly higher on Wednesday. The price of Brent crude, the international benchmark, has fallen from a peak of nearly \$140 a barrel shortly after the invasion of Ukraine, while the American benchmark, West Texas Intermediate, peaked above \$130. Both were below \$80 at the start of the year.

A report by ESAI Energy, an analytics firm, said on Wednesday that the firm expected a global surplus of four million barrels a day in the roughly 100-million-barrel-a-day market in the second quarter. “This is a significant drop in demand,” said Sarah Emerson, ESAI president.

Beyond demand, the surplus reflects releases of strategic reserves from several countries, including the United States. Those releases will eventually end, and reserves will need to be replenished in the future, adding a new source of demand as early as next year. A recovery of demand in China is likely to happen sooner or later, although Chinese reserves are currently high.

Oil production is increasing in the United States — though it remains lower than prepandemic levels — as well as in Guyana, Brazil and a few other countries. Oil companies are cautious about drilling too fast, in part because they fear a sudden drop in prices.

Many energy experts think the price break is temporary.

“It’s a nice little reprieve in the middle of the summer, based on more supply and less demand,” said Tom Kloza, global head of energy analysis at Oil Price Information Service. “But I’m very, very reluctant to say we won’t see \$5 gasoline again. A hurricane would be the mother of all monkey wrenches for this more moderate market.”

But for now, Mr. Kloza said, the high prices of recent months seem to have affected driving decisions.

An Energy Department report released Wednesday showed that gasoline demand in recent weeks had dropped by 1.35 million barrels a day, or more than 10 percent. Gasoline inventories last week rose 5.8 percent, after being drawn down by 2.5 million barrels the previous week. That suggests that prices should continue to fall in the coming days.

“Gasoline stocks are coming off lows quickly as demand continues to come in very weak,” according to a Citigroup report released Wednesday, which also noted recoveries in diesel and jet fuel inventories. “This is against a global backdrop full of uncertainty — geopolitics, weather, pandemic subvariants, recession — which points to a volatile summer, but ultimately we think a downward path for energy prices.”

Prices of other economically sensitive commodities, like copper, have also fallen in recent weeks.

But with a gallon of gas still roughly \$1.50 higher than it was a year ago, not everyone is feeling better at the pump.

“Honestly, I haven’t noticed,” said Doug Johnson, a sales manager for a pipeline services company, filling his pickup truck outside Houston on Tuesday. “You’re talking cents, and I’m talking dollars. We made a conscious decision not to take a vacation this summer.”

[Return to Top](#)

SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/business/economy/inflation-june-soaring-consumers.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/business/economy/inflation-june-soaring-consumers.html</a>
GIST	<p>Prices <a href="#">surged 9.1 percent</a> in June as consumers faced rapidly rising costs for gas, food and rent, a higher-than-expected reading and bad news for Americans at a moment when their wages are falling further behind the nation's soaring cost of living.</p> <p>The fresh Consumer Price Index report released on Wednesday contained <a href="#">particularly worrying signs</a> for the Federal Reserve, providing evidence that price pressures are broad and stubborn in ways that may make them difficult to wrestle under control.</p> <p>Overall, inflation is likely to moderate in July because <a href="#">gas prices</a> have fallen this month — a gallon of regular gas hit an average of about \$5 in June, and the cost is now hovering around \$4.63. But <a href="#">fuel prices are volatile</a>, making it impossible to know if today's lower gas prices will last, and the report suggested that underlying inflation pressures remained intense.</p> <p>In particular, a core inflation index that strips out food and fuel prices to give a sense of the broad trend remained surprisingly high. That measure climbed 5.9 percent over the year through June, barely a slowdown from last month's 6 percent increase. Core prices also jumped 0.7 percent from May to June, more than the previous monthly increase.</p> <p>Persistent price gains portend trouble for President Biden, whose approval ratings have taken a hit amid climbing costs, and could require continued forceful action from the Fed. The central bank is raising rates to slow the economy and to try to restrain inflation, and it is likely to continue adjusting policy quickly — even if doing so risks tipping the economy into a recession — as inflation looks increasingly out of control.</p> <p>"It's an ugly report," said Julia Coronado, the founder of MacroPolicy Perspectives. "I don't think there is anything good about this report, as far as the Fed is concerned, as far as the U.S. consumer is concerned."</p> <p>The global economy has been buffeted by a series of shocks that have pushed inflation higher since the outset of the pandemic. Factory shutdowns and shipping shortages have roiled supply chains, and worker shortages are making it harder for airlines to fly at capacity and for hotels to rent out rooms. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted gas and food supplies.</p> <p>While economic policymakers initially hoped that the disruptions would fade and that prices would ease on their own, they have stopped waiting for that to happen — especially as price increases prove not only pronounced but also widespread, rising rapidly across an array of goods and services.</p> <p>The Fed has been raising interest rates since March in an effort to slow consumer and business demand, hoping to cool the economy and bring inflation back down. The central bank has sped up those rate moves as price increases have proved surprisingly stubborn, and the new inflation report spurred speculation that the Fed might turn even more aggressive.</p> <p>Officials lifted rates by 0.75 percentage points in June, the biggest move since 1994, and had been expected to make a similarly sized move at its meeting in late July. But after the new inflation data, investors began to <a href="#">expect a percentage-point</a> move, based on market pricing.</p> <p>Fed officials themselves were hesitant to call for such a large move.</p> <p>"My most likely posture is 0.75, because of the data I've seen," Mary Daly, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, said in an interview Wednesday night. She explained that she had expected a high number, so the report did not sway her.</p> <p>"I saw that data and thought: This wasn't good news, wasn't expecting good news," she said.</p>

Ms. Daly said she could see a situation in which a bigger, one-percentage-point increase would be possible should consumer inflation expectations move higher and consumer spending fail to slow down.

Loretta Mester, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, said on Bloomberg Television on Wednesday night that the new inflation report was “uniformly bad” and that there would be no reason to do less than the 0.75 points that the Fed approved in June. But she also suggested that she would watch incoming data and wait to see how the economy evolved before deciding whether an even larger move might be appropriate. The Fed’s next policy meeting is July 26-27.

Raphael Bostic, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, told reporters on Wednesday that “everything is in play,” but he, too, made it clear that he was “not wedded to any specific course of action.”

Even a 0.75-point increase would be an unusually quick pace for a central bank that has tended to move gradually in recent decades. The Fed risks [tipping the economy](#) into a recession as it rapidly raises interest rates, because those increases might hit the brakes on the economy so hard that they jar businesses, prompting them to stop hiring and setting off a chain reaction in which households are left with less money to spend.

But policymakers feel that they must choke off inflation quickly even if it increases the chance of a painful slowdown. That’s because they worry that, as inflation remains rapid, consumers and businesses could be getting used to it.

If people begin to ask for higher wages in anticipation of price increases — negotiating cost-of-living adjustments of 6 or 7 percent, for example, instead of the typical 2 to 3 percent — companies could try to pass their swelling labor costs along to customers by raising prices. That could perpetuate rapid inflation, making it much trickier for the Fed to stamp it out.

“The path toward price stability is going to entail some pain, but less pain if we do it than if we don’t do it,” Ms. Mester said.

Inflation is high across much of the world right now, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine pushes up food and fuel prices and transportation and manufacturing issues continue to keep some goods scarce. But the new inflation report also shows evidence of price pressures that have little to do with global supply. Meals at restaurants, tickets for sporting events and other services are growing more expensive.

For consumers, the fresh report is confirmation that it is increasingly tough to make ends meet. While wages are rising, they have failed to keep up with rapid price increases. After accounting for price increases, average hourly earnings have declined 3.6 percent over the past year.

At the same time, necessities are becoming more expensive. Food prices overall rose 10.4 percent in June from a year earlier, the biggest annual increase since 1981. Rent for a house or an apartment also costs significantly more, having climbed at the fastest monthly pace since 1986.

That is making life difficult for many families. Soaring housing costs have made relocating difficult for Elizabeth Haynes, 41, who lives with her husband in McKinney, Texas. The couple wants to relocate to another state, but high housing costs are so far prohibitive.

“We’re trying to get out of Texas, and that’s proving really difficult with the rental costs and the housing costs and the shortages and all of that,” said Ms. Haynes, who is hoping to land a place she can afford in Connecticut. “So that’s kind of our big pain point.”

As rapid price increases burden many Americans, they are also taking a toll on economic confidence, posing a big challenge for Mr. Biden and Democrats ahead of the midterm elections. Mr. Biden has acknowledged the pain inflation is causing, saying in a statement on Wednesday that it is “unacceptably high.”

But he also called the report “out of date” because it did not capture the recent retreat in prices at the gasoline pump and in other commodities. Democrats have suggested things will soon get better, pointing out that, as fuel costs subside, overall inflation is likely to decline from its 9.1 percent reading in June.

“I think we’re peaking — I think we’re going to be going down from here,” Representative Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, said when asked for her reaction to the new data.

While there is hope in Washington and on Wall Street that inflation will come down sustainably, economists have repeatedly suggested that inflation has peaked over the past 12 months only to watch it pick back up.

That is partly because prices for certain goods have behaved strangely: Cars have been in short supply, and their prices have been skyrocketing, for instance. It is also partly because economists have dismissed big price swings in various goods and services as temporary one-offs, and the surprises have just continued to add up.

“People have not done a very good job of predicting car inflation,” said Jason Furman, an economist at Harvard. “Beyond that, inflation is about more than 10 individual stories about 10 individual goods and services — it’s about forces in the overall economy.”

That said, there are some reasons that today’s rapid price gains could abate based on the economy’s fundamentals.

Consumers may struggle to sustain their spending as prices jump. If they move in with roommates, stop taking vacations or pull back on social activities to save money, supply could begin to catch up with demand, allowing price gains to decelerate.

Stores including Target are already trying to sell off bloated inventories, which could allow retail prices to slow. Costs for goods including sporting equipment and televisions have already begun to cool.

But, for now, hints at and forecasts for a cool-down are likely to be insufficient comfort for economic policymakers when there is little sign in the data that any concerted pullback is kicking in.

“We have to be so humble about forecasting inflation,” said Blerina Uruci, an economist at T. Rowe Price, who does expect inflation pressures to fade. “We’ve just been so wrong, so consistently, in one direction.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Virginia inundated: flooding, landslides</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/virginia-flooding-missing.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/virginia-flooding-missing.html</a>
GIST	<p>More than 100 homes were damaged and at least 40 people were unaccounted for on Wednesday after powerful storms swept through southwestern Virginia and brought heavy flooding and landslides, local officials said.</p> <p>More than 4.5 inches of rain fell on Buchanan County, which borders Kentucky and West Virginia in southwestern Virginia, on Tuesday night, according to the <a href="#">National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration</a>.</p> <p>The area lies inside the Appalachian Mountains and the mountain ridges acted like a funnel for the rain, as the river rose quickly and overflowed onto roads. Homes were swept off their foundations and people were forced to wade through waist-deep water to reach safety.</p>

No fatalities or injuries have been reported, the authorities said. The number of people considered unaccounted for — 44 children and adults, as of Wednesday night — is derived from the number of people whom loved ones or family have not been able to reach or contact.

“It doesn't necessarily mean they are in trouble or danger, it's just that we need to go check on them,” Chief Deputy Eric Breeding of the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office said [at a Wednesday morning news conference](#).

Gov. Glenn Youngkin of Virginia issued a state of emergency on Wednesday, and nearly 20 search and rescue organizations were helping Buchanan County, which is home to less than 20,000 people, [according to census data](#).

“I am deeply saddened at the devastating news of flooding in Buchanan County,” Mr. Youngkin wrote on Twitter. “We are making every resource available to help those impacted.”

Billy Chrimes, a search and rescue specialist from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, said the effects of the flooding were causing delays in checking on people and rescuing them.

“A lot of roadways are blocked by landslides, bridges, the approaches to those bridges are washed out,” Mr. Chrimes said at the news conference. “It's going to take time for that access to be restored, make contact with everyone and make sure they have their basic needs taken care of.”

J.R. Miller, 39, said he spoke by FaceTime with his aunt and grandfather, who live in Pilgrim's Knob, when the rain grew heavier.

He watched as his 79-year-old grandfather tried to haul his beloved power tools to higher ground so they wouldn't get damaged. Mr. Miller said his family members watched as the Dismal Creek across the street rose and eventually flooded over the road by at least three feet.

“Never in my almost 40 years have I ever seen anything like it,” Mr. Miller recalled about what he saw on FaceTime.

Mr. Miller, who now lives in China Grove, N.C., said that the two relatives started shoving valuables into bags to try to salvage what they could as they realized they needed to get to higher ground. They waded across the street in waist-high water to help a neighbor before making their way to the post office, which was visible from the home.

Once they reached safety, Mr. Miller said, his family were able to send a text letting them know they had made it. They also shared with him that several homes had been washed off their foundations and trucks had been catapulted more than 500 feet down the road by strong currents.

The home his grandfather had lived in for more than 20 years is most likely destroyed, Mr. Miller said. Relatives told him there was more than six feet of water inside the house and the refrigerator had been thrown sideways on the ground.

Mr. Miller said his grandfather and aunt — and most people in the area — were without cellphone service. The area has poor service to begin with, he said, and relies heavily on Wi-Fi.

“It's a really tight-knit community,” Mr. Miller said. “Everybody basically lives their whole lives there. It's an area that has taken a very hard hit.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Ukraine challenges allegiance of priests
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/world/europe/ukraine-priests-russia.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/world/europe/ukraine-priests-russia.html</a>

RIVNE, Ukraine — A priest doused in green dye during a Sunday liturgy. Another yanked out of his western Ukrainian church as the police stood by watching. A church attacked by vandals, who filled it with foam, plastered the walls with portraits of Stalin and later set it on fire.

For centuries, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been a dominant spiritual force in the country. Now the church is increasingly an object of distrust, largely because its spiritual leadership — at least until May — was in Moscow, rather than Kyiv.

Government officials once courted church leaders. Now they speak openly about suspicions that some priests are collaborating with Moscow and worry that the broader church could be a Trojan horse for pro-Russian views and more.

When it comes to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, “we are not talking about god, faith, or spiritual development,” said Serhiy Kondrachuk, the head of the Rivne regional council in central Ukraine. “We can only talk about the biggest danger to our national security.”

That the Orthodox church is now a focus of official suspicion is another example of how profoundly the war has upended all aspects of life in Ukraine. Even before the war, the issue of relations with Russia was already a fractious one, between those who supported the church loyal to Moscow and those who supported the newer, similarly named Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which was based in Kyiv.

Now the churches aligned with Kyiv are actively pressuring priests in the other church to change their allegiance. Violent altercations have broken out. The tensions are so deep that in May, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church amended its bylaws to grant itself “full independence and autonomy” from the church in Moscow, the tectonic rupture of a centuries-old relationship.

Even so, official suspicions remain. In one example, at the end of June, the western city of Lviv held a [unanimous but symbolic vote](#) to ban the church.

In Ukraine’s Parliament, Mykyta Poturaiev, a lawmaker, convened an official session on the church’s influence. In an interview, he confirmed that the authorities were investigating priests aligned with the Moscow church for providing targets for Russian artillery; informing on Ukrainian activists; and sending data on the positions of Ukrainian troops.

“We understand how carefully they prepared for the invasion of Ukraine,” he said, “and how many [agents] were sent here and recruited.”

One case on the first day of the invasion, Feb. 24, led to the arrest of a priest in a field in a Kyiv suburbs, where a Russian helicopter had been shot down. Police officials believed he was trying to help the downed pilots escape. Another priest from the Kyiv suburb of Borodianka was [accused](#) of acting as an informant to Russian soldiers who occupied the now-decimated town. In Rivne, the wife of a local priest was detained on suspicion of collaborating with the Russians.

Information on the cases is closely held by the courts and intelligence services, which have sought to turn some priests under suspicion into informants. No clergymen have been convicted publicly.

Mr. Kondrachuk, the local official in Rivne, displays the case of a Javelin anti-tank missile in his office and has been lobbying to get the Ukrainian Orthodox Church banned in his region. At scholastic and religious events, he said, congregants openly espoused pro-Russian views. He cited a prewar graduation celebration in which dozens of girls sang a song about “waiting for the glory of Holy Russia,” and a Sunday school festival in which children were encouraged to celebrate Imperial Russia’s Romanov dynasty.

“Since Ukraine became independent, Russia has tried to bring its influence and values — cultural, religious, and otherwise — here,” he said.



When Ukraine left the Soviet Union in 1991, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church retained its loyalty to Moscow, while the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was founded, loyal to Kyiv. Today, there are approximately 8,000 parishes loyal to the Kyiv-based church and still roughly 12,000 loyal to the Moscow patriarchate. But since the war started, hundreds of churches have switched to the Kyiv-based church.

Metropolitan Clement, a spokesman for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, denied giving any assistance to Moscow's war aims and noted that the church's leader unexpectedly condemned Russia's invasion on the day it happened. Yet loyalties remained unclear, since the church remained under the authority of Patriarch Kirill, the 75-year-old leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, a close ally of President Vladimir V. Putin and a prominent supporter of the war.

Mr. Putin's justifications for the war include conservative religious undertones; he has called Ukraine an "inalienable part" of Russia's "spiritual space." At the end of May, the church finally cut ties to Moscow, after hundreds of parishes shifted their allegiances to Kyiv.

"Their motivation is mostly threats," Metropolitan Clement said of the priests who switched sides. "Like when people come to your house, break windows, paint swastikas. Or like in the Lviv region a priest was doused with brilliant green for 'being a collaborator'. What is his collaboration? Praying the faith he believes to be true?"

Overall, though, Ukrainian officials said that priests constitute a small percentage of the more than 1,400 cases brought against citizens for collaborating with the Russians. And Mr. Poturaiev, the Ukrainian lawmaker, conceded that the issue of traitors inside the church were individuals rather than a "systemic problem of the whole institution."

But the mistrust is still very real. An official with the Security Services of Ukraine, who insisted on anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic, said that about 200 priests from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in "every region" of the country were under heavy surveillance as potential collaborators. Beyond them, the official said, "almost all" the church's priests were under some form of surveillance. The information could not be independently confirmed, but Metropolitan Clement acknowledged the pressure. "At least all church bishops are certainly under surveillance," he said.

The allegations have not stopped pilgrims from coming to the Monastery of the Caves, one of the holiest sites for Orthodox believers from all over the world. After 1991, the Moscow patriarchate retained access to the site, while the Ukrainian government formally owns it as a museum. On a recent Sunday, congregants and soldiers attended Mass.

Yuriy Horodiyenko, a 48-year-old army medic, made a pilgrimage to the ancient heart of the monastery, an underground crypt, with a cast on his right hand from an injury sustained on the battlefield. He said he had been baptized at the Monastery of the Caves and trusted church leadership to decide its future.

"I am praying for Ukraine, for Kyiv, and that there will be no war," he said.

A soldier from the destroyed city of Mariupol, Serhiy Scherbak, said he had heard of individual collaborators affiliated with the church, but noted, "the church system itself is not guilty."

But in the village of Hil'cha Druha, half an hour's drive south of the city of Rivne, a group of locals who had led their congregation through the process of switching their church to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine were far more skeptical.

"We understand that without our Ukrainian church and our army, our state won't exist," said Katya Tushkovts, who rallied her congregation to switch churches after the local priest had an icon of the Romanovs, the last Russian royal family, painted in the church several years ago. Once the Russian invasion started, she found a critical mass willing to make the switch.

The priest did not change over with them.

After the group confronted him with a request to switch signed by the majority of the congregation, a supervising priest from the Moscow patriarchy arrived with the local cleric to remove their property from the building.

“The supervising priest got on his knees and cursed our village,” Ms. Tushkovts said. “He said he hoped not a single person here stayed alive. What kind of priest is that?”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Hawaii public schools masks optional
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/hawaii-schools-indoor-mask-mandate.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/hawaii-schools-indoor-mask-mandate.html</a>
GIST	<p>Hawaii has stuck with mask mandates longer than any other state. It waited until late March, when the first Omicron surge was receding, to <a href="#">drop its requirement for most indoor public settings</a> — and even then, the requirement was <a href="#">retained for public schools</a>.</p> <p>But that rule, the last statewide school mask mandate in the United States, will be scrapped on Aug. 1, when most public school students in Hawaii will return to the classroom for the new school year, state officials announced on Tuesday. (The state <a href="#">lifted</a> its outdoor mask mandate on school campuses in early March.)</p> <p>“We really are looking at trying to move toward a more normal classroom experience this fall,” Dr. Sarah Kemble, the state epidemiologist at the Hawaii Department of Health, said at a <a href="#">virtual news conference</a>. “This is the best opportunity we’ve had yet to move toward this new normal.”</p> <p>To help achieve that goal, she said, masks will become optional inside Hawaii’s public schools, and quarantines stemming from classroom infections will no longer be required. Instead, mask use indoors will be recommended for specific classrooms if there is a cluster of infections in that class, Dr. Kemble said.</p> <p>Face coverings in schools will only be “highly encouraged,” not required, Dr. Kemble said, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determines community levels of Covid-19 to be “medium” or “high.”</p> <p>The C.D.C. uses local hospitalization rates and measures of hospital capacity, in addition to case counts, to make its determinations, which are meant to help people decide for themselves whether to wear masks or take other precautions. Where levels are high, <a href="#">the C.D.C. recommends</a> wearing a well-fitting mask indoors in public, including in schools, regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>Nearly 60 percent of counties in the United States currently have low community Covid-19 levels, according to this measure. But of Hawaii’s four counties, <a href="#">three</a> are in the high-risk category and one is rated as medium-risk.</p> <p>“The Covid landscape has changed — we’re at a different trajectory in the pandemic,” Dr. Kemble said in discussing the end of the school mask mandate. She cited several factors behind the decision, including the wide availability of vaccines for all age groups and ample supplies of testing kits.</p> <p>Top federal health officials urged Americans this week <a href="#">to do more to protect themselves from Covid</a> because of rising levels of <a href="#">a rapidly spreading Omicron subvariant known as BA.5</a>. The officials pointed to a wide range of strategies, including the C.D.C.’s mask recommendation for high-risk counties.</p> <p>“You can be previously infected — even as recent as the last couple of months — and have a very high rate of reinfection,” said Dr. Ashish K. Jha, President Biden’s coronavirus response coordinator. Experts say there is no evidence BA.5 causes more severe disease than earlier versions of the virus did.</p> <p>Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Mr. Biden’s chief medical adviser for the pandemic, said that “we should not let it disrupt our lives, but we cannot deny that it is a reality that we need to deal with.”</p>

About 44 percent of Hawaiian children aged 5 to 11 are fully vaccinated, as are 85 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds, [according](#) to the C.D.C. But only 26 percent of adolescents 12 to 17 have received boosters, Dr. Kemble said.

“You don’t know if the student in class sitting next to your child is going to be masking or not, so now is a really good time to boost,” she said, urging parents to get their children vaccinated before the new school year begins.

Heidi Armstrong, the interim deputy superintendent of the state’s education department, noted that the state’s indoor mask mandate was unpopular with some families. But she emphasized on Tuesday that it succeeded in keeping many more students in the classroom after the disruptions of the pandemic’s early months.

Ms. Armstrong said that even though the mandate is ending, any student, teacher or employee who wants to wear a mask indoors “will have that choice absolutely respected.”

The Hawaii State Teachers Association has expressed concern about the quality of ventilation in many schools, and is recommending that its members continue to wear masks indoors to maximize the chances of staying healthy, because of a shortage of substitute teachers.

“In order for the mask mandates to be lifted successfully, we need to have clear mitigation strategies in place,” Logan Okita, the group’s vice president, said in a statement on Tuesday.

Ms. Okita, an elementary schoolteacher in Oahu, said that Tuesday’s announcement allowed teachers, students and families “to have time to process that information and make decisions and have those conversations at home.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 IMF: global recession risk rising</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jul/14/global-recession-risk-rising-as-economic-outlook-darkens-significantly-imf-says">https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jul/14/global-recession-risk-rising-as-economic-outlook-darkens-significantly-imf-says</a>
GIST	<p>The outlook for the global economy has “darkened significantly” in recent months, the head of the IMF has warned, and the world faces an increasing risk of recession in the next 12 months.</p> <p>The commodity price shock from the war in <a href="#">Ukraine</a> had exacerbated the cost-of-living crisis for hundreds of millions of people, Kristalina Georgieva said on Wednesday, and it was “only getting worse”.</p> <p>Inflation was also higher than expected, <a href="#">she said in a blogpost</a> that came on the same day as the latest figures showed that prices in the US rose at a 40-year high of <a href="#">9.1% in June</a>.</p> <p>Economists and investors now think the US Federal Reserve could hike interest rates by a historic 1% when its board meets in two weeks’ time.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Bank of Canada shocked markets on Wednesday</a> by raising its base rate by a full percentage point, while the Reserve Bank of New Zealand increased its benchmark rate by 0.5% this week, as did the Bank of Korea. Singapore’s central bank also tightened its monetary policy on Thursday.</p> <p>Along with another expected move higher by the Fed, this keeps heaping pressure on other central banks to follow suit to bring inflation under control.</p> <p>With supply bottlenecks and repeated Covid lockdowns in China also crimping the world’s patchy pandemic recovery, Georgieva said the G20 finance ministers and central bankers gathering in Bali “face a global economic outlook that has darkened significantly”.</p>

“The outlook remains extremely uncertain. Think of how further disruption in the natural gas supply to Europe could plunge many economies into recession and trigger a global energy crisis,” she wrote. “This is just one of the factors that could worsen an already difficult situation.

“It is going to be a tough 2022 – and possibly an even tougher 2023, with increased risk of recession.”

The IMF would be downgrading its growth forecasts for global growth for both 2022 and 2023 later this month, she said, having warned in April that its forecast of 3.6% was likely to be revised downwards.

The European Commission was expected to cut its eurozone GDP forecast for 2023 to 1.4% from 2.3% on Thursday, [according to Bloomberg](#), citing a leaked draft from the EU executive in Brussels. Inflation in the single currency area is expected to average 7.6% this year before falling to 4% next year, the document said.

The European Central Bank is under pressure to raise interest rates to combat inflation and protect the euro, which this week [slumped to parity with the US dollar](#) for the first time in two decades.

Georgieva said raising rates to combat inflation was one of three key policies needed to combat the threat to the world economy along with reducing government debt and more global cooperation.

But raising rates is a high-risk strategy for many countries amid increasing alarm in the UK, for example, that the Bank of England’s aggressive rate hikes [will plunge the country into recession](#).

EU countries also face the same dilemma at a time when it faces a potentially crippling energy crisis this coming winter if, as expected, [Russia](#) turns off the supply of natural gas over the bloc’s opposition to the Kremlin’s war against Ukraine.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Day 141 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/russia-ukraine-war-update-what-we-know-on-day-141-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/russia-ukraine-war-update-what-we-know-on-day-141-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A deal to resume exporting Ukrainian grain has been announced with the establishment of a coordination and monitoring centre in Istanbul.</b> Turkey’s defence minister Hulusi Akar said Ankara will ensure the safety of shipments in transit and the parties will jointly check grain cargoes in ports after officials from <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, Russia, United Nations and Turkey met for talks in Istanbul on Wednesday. UN chief António Guterres described the talks as a “critical step forward” but said more work was needed before a deal is set to be signed next week.</li><li>• <b>A <a href="#">traffic jam of more than 130 cargo ships</a> loaded with Ukrainian grain is waiting in the Black Sea to pass into the Danube.</b> The ships are waiting to access exit routes through the Sulina and Bystre estuary canals to reach a series of ports and terminals in Romania from where the grain can be transported on around the world.</li><li>• <b>Russian and proxy forces have reportedly entered the town of Siversk in Ukraine’s Donetsk region</b>, according to Russian media reports. State news agency Tass quoted Vitaly Kiselyov, an official from the self-appointed Luhansk People’s Republic, as saying the town could fall within a couple of days, but it was not clear what that claim was based on.</li><li>• <b>Ukraine’s foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, has ruled out ceding territory to Russia as part of any ceasefire deal.</b> In a briefing, Kuleba <a href="#">said no peace talks were under way between Moscow and Kyiv</a> “because of Russia’s position and its continued aggression against our country”.</li><li>• <b>Russia has forcibly removed nearly 2 million people from Ukraine, including several hundred thousand children</b>, since its invasion of the country, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian are being held in filtration camps in the temporarily Russian-occupied territories, Zelenskiy said in a video address to the Asian Leadership Conference in Seoul on Wednesday.</li><li>• <b>The death toll from a weekend Russian missile attack on a residential apartment block in Chasiv Yar in eastern Ukraine has risen to at least 47.</b> According to Kyiv, the residential</li></ul>

building [was hit by Russian rockets fired from truck-borne systems late on Saturday evening](#). The Ukrainian emergency services initially gave a death toll of 10, but as rescue teams continued to comb through the debris [that number rose](#).

- **Russian forces will probably focus on taking several small Donbas towns during the coming week, including Siversk and Dolyna on the approaches to Slovyansk and Kramatorsk**, according to the UK Ministry of Defence. “The urban areas of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk likely remain the principal objectives for this phase of the operation,” the [British intelligence report said](#).
- **North Korea has officially recognised the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic and the self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic**, the pro-Russian occupied territories in the east of Ukraine. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) [becomes only the third UN member state to recognise them as legitimate authorities](#), after Russia and Syria. In response, Ukraine’s foreign ministry [announced it has cut ties with North Korea](#).
- **The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, called for an immediate halt to Russian deportations of Ukrainian citizens**. Blinken [accused Russia of “deliberately separating Ukrainian children from their parents](#) and abducting others from orphanages before putting them up for adoption inside Russia”.
- **A third American national is being held captive by pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, according to reports**. Suedi Murekezi, 35, was arrested last month in Kherson, a Russian-occupied port city in southern Ukraine where he had been living for more than two years, his brother Sele Murekezi said.
- **A Moscow court has ordered one of the last prominent opposition figures still in Russia, Ilya Yashin, to be detained for two months** pending an investigation into the spreading of “fake information” about Russia’s army. If convicted, [he faces up to 15 years in prison for spreading “false information”](#) about Russian forces fighting in Ukraine.
- **Lithuania will allow sanctioned Russian goods to transit its territory on their way to Russia’s Kaliningrad exclave**, its foreign ministry said on Wednesday, reversing its policy after new European Commission guidelines.
- **The global economic outlook has “darkened significantly” following the consequences of the war in Ukraine**, according to the head of the International Monetary Fund. Kristalina Georgieva said the global outlook remains “extremely uncertain” with an increased risk of recession. “The human tragedy of the war in Ukraine has worsened. So, too, has its economic impact ... and it’s only getting worse,” she said. G20 finance ministers and central bank governors are preparing to meet in Bali this week.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Aging infrastructure finally see upgrades?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/aging-seattle-infrastructure-other-ports-could-finally-see-upgrades/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/aging-seattle-infrastructure-other-ports-could-finally-see-upgrades/</a>
GIST	<p>The historic Coupeville wharf on Whidbey Island — built in 1905 — was once a stopover for steam boats. Today, it offers kayak rentals, boat mornings and dining in a restaurant built at its end.</p> <p>In 2019, the Port of Coupeville launched a nearly \$1 million project to replace aging pilings, among other repairs, to stabilize the wharf and keep vibrations from collapsing the restaurant. But the project has been in limbo, along with nearly 100 other Puget Sound projects that include a \$70 million Pier 91 redevelopment project at the Port of Seattle.</p> <p>The projects, which range from small riprap wall repairs to major dredging, have been stalled because they need an Army Corps of Engineers federal permit that requires consultations from the National Marine Fisheries Service to review impacts on salmon runs and orcas that are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>The National Marine Fisheries Service paused proposed projects after concluding the development would damage nearshore marine areas used by young salmon. This would put protected Puget Sound runs and the</p>

orcas in “jeopardy” — a legal term that under the federal Endangered Species Act represents unacceptable risk.

This has caused considerable frustrations among people who want to do maintenance or other shoreline work.

“We have piles that are completely rotted out. This is not an expansion. It’s a simple replacement of the current piles. This is a very small project,” said Chris Michalopoulos, executive director of the Port of Coupeville.

At the Port of the Seattle, the [Pier 91](#) project involves pile replacements, demolition of a condemned apron of timber, 830 feet of seawall construction and other work.

Nearly half of the shoreline development projects that could receive permits involve residential properties. Another 38% have been proposed by businesses and the rest are municipal projects, according to an analysis by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

In late June, the National Marine Fisheries Service rolled out [a new plan](#) that attempts to move these projects forward.

The projects would go through a streamlined permitting process with requirements for fish-friendly construction tactics or contributions to Puget Sound restoration funds.

Through this plan, National Marine Fisheries Service hope to achieve “no net loss” of the inshore areas, according to the agency. Fishery scientists say these are vital rearing areas for young chinook salmon, yet some 95% of these rearing areas already have been degraded by development impacts.

“We’re just trying to hold the line ... so we don’t lose any more of this critical habitat,” said Eric Murray, a National Marine Fisheries Service official who helped to [develop the new plan](#).

There are many ways development can harm the nearshore area. Bulk heads cut off coastal areas that young salmon can use at high tides, dikes can replace wetlands with farm acreage and piers can be barriers to the movements of young salmon by creating shaded area that fish avoid.

National Marine Fisheries Service officials say that if the ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Coupeville are to undertake this kind of construction, they should either pay directly or indirectly for mitigation efforts to give salmon and orcas a better chance of survival.

Over time, the federal fishery officials are hoping that restoration projects, like removing dikes to reclaim wetlands, will result in a net expansion of the nearshore rearing areas, and improve the survival rates of threatened Chinook, which are a prime food source for the endangered southern resident orcas.

The Pier 91 project is part of a broader backlog of work at the Northwest Seaport Alliance, which includes the ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Four years ago, the Port of Seattle submitted an application for a permit to repair and maintain portions of more than 15 miles of Elliott Bay and Duwamish shoreline. The work would involve riprap rock and seawall repair as well as some shoreline “softening” to improve habitat.

In Tacoma, a port project to repair big pipes that drain stormwater has been on hold for four years.

“It’s made it really difficult to do that kind of maintenance and repair work ... which is typically good for the environment,” said Jason Jordan, director of environmental programs at the Port of Tacoma.

Port officials also are concerned that projects will not be able to comply with some of the restrictions imposed in the streamlined permitting process.



The National Marine Fisheries Service has placed an annual cap on how much material could be dredged to improve vessel access. The Port of Seattle has one project that, by itself, would exceed that limit.

“We had raised concerns with their limits when we were discussing this two or three years ago,” said Laura Wolfe, environmental program manager at the Port of Seattle.

A project that did not qualify for streamlined permitting could still go through a more complicated permitting process that involves consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service. Seattle and Tacoma Port officials are wary of how long that process will take and whether the federal agency will have enough staff to handle all the review work.

Cost is another concern.

Permit applicants can use a [“conservation calculator”](#) that assesses negative impacts against things that help fish like taking out creosote piles that can pollute the water. The negative impacts register as debits and the positives as credits.

If the project is a net detriment to fish, it could still go forward but the damage would need to be offset, likely through purchasing credits from [conservation banks](#) that use the money to buy and maintain wildlife habitat or state agency the Puget Sound Partnership.

For some projects, the costs could be significant.

Northwest Seaport Alliance officials used the calculator to analyze one already completed project. They found permit requirements would have increased the cost by 18%-30%.

“We support the environment but that’s a substantial increase,” Jordan said.

Ahren Stroming, executive policy advisor for Puget Sound Partnership, said the conservation credits currently sell for \$1,200 each, but the price could vary in the years ahead.

Stroming said the federal permitting process is expected to generate thousands of conservation credits and the partnership has a big list of projects that could benefit Puget Sound if funding is obtained.

“It could really be a big game changer that would kind of stop the death by 1,000 cuts that we’re seeing for Puget Sound, and the nearshore ecosystems in particular,” Stroming said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Subvariant BA.5: elusive, fuels reinfections
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/highly-transmissible-covid-19-variant-causing-reinfections-washington/281-5556fb29-49e4-4d8f-ae2d-c6231bf53388v">https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/highly-transmissible-covid-19-variant-causing-reinfections-washington/281-5556fb29-49e4-4d8f-ae2d-c6231bf53388v</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — It’s being called highly transmissible and elusive, and it’s fueling a rise in coronavirus cases in Washington and across the country.</p> <p>The omicron subvariant BA.5 is the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Washington state, and now throughout the U.S. according to public health officials and new data released Wednesday.</p> <p>The virus is catching many off guard who have been vaccinated and boosted, because many people are getting reinfected.</p> <p>Even libraries across Puget Sound are making adjustments. Inside the Beacon Hill Library Branch, while checking out books, free COVID-19 tests are available to take home.</p> <p>It is one of the many precautions inside the library as COVID-19 cases continue to rise, fueled by BA.5.</p>

	<p>“I’ve heard a little bit about it. The BA.5 but I’m not that concerned. I just had COVID,” said Jenny Pohly.</p> <p>Pohly said coronavirus is a topic of conversation among her family and friends again.</p> <p>“It’s so weird. I feel like every month now a bunch of people will get it and then it goes away and then a bunch of people will get it,” Pohly said.</p> <p>New numbers from the Washington State Department of Health show BA.5 is now the dominant strain in Washington.</p> <p>“Maybe I’m a little delusional but I just had it... how can I get it again?” Pohly asked rhetorically.</p> <p>Dr. Pavitra Roychoudhury of the University of Washington Virology Lab explained how this strain is leading to more cases.</p> <p>“It’s a variant that’s been shown to be highly transmissible. And it’s also been shown to be really good at evading antibody protections,” Dr. Roychoudhury said.</p> <p>He believes now is not a time to let your guard down.</p> <p>“I am quite concerned by the fact that the numbers of cases are still so high, the percent positivity rate for samples that are coming into our lab is still well over 20%. And it has been above 20%, or around 20%, for over a month now. And that tells me that there’s this sustained level of community transmission that’s going on,” Dr. Roychoudhury said.</p> <p>In response to the rise in cases, Seattle Public Libraries has adjusted its hours.</p> <p>“The reason we are reducing hours is because of staffing levels and impacts of COVID cases,” said Andrew Harbison, the interim Director of Public Services at Seattle Public Libraries.</p> <p>Harbison said they have increased staffing levels by 9%, but with sick calls and other leave, Harbison said it is back down to 8%.</p> <p>“So we’re kind of back where we started,” he added.</p> <p>“I think the most important thing is to get boosted if one has not been boosted yet,” Dr. Roychoudhury said. “The boosters, with the current boosters that we have were designed based on the original SARS-COVID-2 sequence or the original lineage. So what’s currently being developed is a booster that is specific to the Omicron lineages that are currently circulating. And that will help a lot.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 FDA clears new Covid vaccine: Novavax</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/vaccine/novavax-covid-19-vaccine-fda-emergency-authorization/507-ed9cba0b-7baa-486a-8959-b9a832a40dca">https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/vaccine/novavax-covid-19-vaccine-fda-emergency-authorization/507-ed9cba0b-7baa-486a-8959-b9a832a40dca</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The U.S. is getting another <a href="#">COVID-19 vaccine</a> choice as the Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday cleared <a href="#">Novavax</a> shots for adults.</p> <p>Novavax makes a more traditional type of shot than the three other COVID-19 vaccines available for use in the U.S. -- and one that’s already available in Europe and multiple other countries.</p> <p>Nearly a quarter of American adults still haven’t gotten their primary vaccinations even this late in the pandemic, and experts expect at least some of them to roll up their sleeves for a more conventional option — a protein-based vaccine.</p>

The Maryland company also hopes its shots can become a top booster choice in the U.S. and beyond. Tens of millions of Americans still need boosters that experts call critical for the best possible protection as the coronavirus continues to mutate.

For now, the FDA authorized Novavax's initial two-dose series for people 18 and older.

"I encourage anyone who is eligible for, but has not yet received, a COVID-19 vaccine to consider doing so," FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf said in a statement.

Before shots begin, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must recommend how they should be used, a decision expected next week.

Novavax CEO Stanley Erck told The Associated Press that he expected the U.S. to expand use of the vaccine beyond unvaccinated adults fairly quickly.

Already the FDA is evaluating it for those as young as 12, Erck said. Novavax also has submitted data on booster doses, including "mix-and-match" use in people who'd earlier received Pfizer or Moderna vaccinations.

The Biden administration has bought 3.2 million Novavax doses so far, and Erck said vaccinations should begin later this month.

Sharon Bentley of Argyle, Texas, is one of the holdouts. Bentley was hesitant about the first COVID-19 vaccines but then her husband volunteered for a Novavax trial, getting two doses and later a booster.

Her husband's positive experience with a more tried-and-true technology, "that convinced me," Bentley said, adding that she planned to tell some unvaccinated friends about the option, too.

The Novavax vaccine is made of copies of the spike protein that coats the coronavirus, packaged into nanoparticles that to the immune system resemble a virus. Then an immune-boosting ingredient, or adjuvant, that's made from the bark of a South American tree is added that acts as a red flag to ensure those particles look suspicious enough to spark a strong immune response.

Protein vaccines have been used for years to prevent hepatitis B, shingles and other diseases. It's a very different technology than the dominant Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines that deliver genetic instructions for the body to produce its own copies of the spike protein. The lesser-used Johnson & Johnson option uses a harmless cold virus to deliver spike-making instructions.

Like the other vaccines used in the U.S., the Novavax shots have proved highly effective at preventing COVID-19's most severe outcomes. Typical vaccine reactions were mild, including arm pain and fatigue. But FDA did warn about the possibility of a rare risk, heart inflammation, that also has been seen with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

The Novavax vaccine was tested long before the omicron variant struck. But last month, the company released data showing a booster dose promised a strong immune response even against omicron's newest relatives — preliminary evidence that several of the FDA's scientific advisers called compelling.

Still, U.S. regulators are planning for a fall booster campaign using Pfizer and Moderna shots that better target omicron subtypes — and Novavax also has begun testing updated shots. Erck said the company could have updated doses available late in the year.

European regulators recently cleared the Novavax vaccine to be used as young as age 12, and several countries have authorized booster doses of its original vaccine.

	Earlier manufacturing difficulties held up the vaccine, although Erck said those have been solved and Novavax can meet global demand. Much of the company's vaccine, including doses for the U.S., are being produced by the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer.
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Crews clear Green River homeless camps</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/crews-clean-up-green-river-encampment-auburn-kent/O32WIJ3U6JA77M5OV2YQ6GLQLE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/crews-clean-up-green-river-encampment-auburn-kent/O32WIJ3U6JA77M5OV2YQ6GLQLE/</a>
GIST	<p>KENT and Auburn, Wash. — Crews are cleaning up a string of homeless encampments along a section of Green River Road between Auburn and Kent on Wednesday.</p> <p>The cleanup effort is spearheaded by King County’s Road Services Division in collaboration with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority.</p> <p>The goal is to clear garbage and debris that has accumulated on the stretch of road in unincorporated King County and to address rights-of-way on the road.</p> <p>King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn recently proposed creating an interagency taskforce to clean up the Green River encampment and connect those living here with shelter and services.</p> <p>There are an estimated 30 encampments and up to 100 homeless people living in the wooded areas, along with large piles of trash and debris along a stream pouring into the Green River.</p> <p>There is also what appears to be a chop shop.</p> <p>The King County Road Services Division previously removed stolen vehicles from the area in preparation for Wednesday’s cleanup.</p> <p>In a statement, Dunn said that he’s glad the county is taking action and responding to the serious concerns of the nearby communities.</p> <p>“This is a good first step — but there is more to be done to fully address the sprawling string of homeless encampments in this area, connect more individuals experiencing homelessness with the services they need to get their life back on track, and maintain the safety and security of the surrounding neighborhoods. This is an important task, and one that I will continue to focus on.”</p> <p>Dunn said the Green River site is a pilot project because of its size and longevity. Not only is it the largest encampment in unincorporated King County, but it has drawn complaints from the community for more than three years, Dunn said.</p> <p>The county will began clearing the area on Wednesday morning.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Seattle mayor \$2M plan; attract PD officers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Seattle-considers-bonuses-tuition-help-to-17303558.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Seattle-considers-bonuses-tuition-help-to-17303558.php</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell announced a \$2 million plan Wednesday for dealing with what he described as a critical shortage of police officers in the city, including recruitment bonuses, reimbursement of moving costs and possible tuition assistance.</p> <p>Seattle has lost more than 400 officers since 2019 as the department was heavily criticized for its sometimes violent response to racial justice protests and City Council members embraced calls to defund police following the killing of George Floyd.</p>

Harrell's plan includes \$1 million the City Council already approved spending for recruitment and hiring bonuses. That money came from savings in unspent officer salaries.

“We want the right numbers of officers and the right kind of officers,” Harrell said. “It crosses racial lines, it crosses socioeconomic lines that people want to feel safe, and they have a right to feel safe.”

The Seattle Police Department remains down 372 officers out of a force approved for more than 1,300. That's hurt emergency response times, prompted the department to stop responding to low-priority calls and required officers to work overtime, hurting morale.

The current number of officers is Seattle's lowest in 30 years. Seattle's population has soared in that time. About 40% of the department's detectives have had to handle patrol duties, severely cutting the number available to investigate serious crime.

Harrell wants to offer signing bonuses of up to \$30,000 for lateral transfers from other police departments and up to \$7,500 for new officers — amounts that would make Seattle competitive with other cities trying to recruit and retain police, he said.

He called for reimbursing candidates' applicant fees, travel expenses and relocation costs, and said he wanted a study conducted to determine the feasibility of paying tuition for college students who commit to working for the department for at least five years.

The plan also calls for redoubling efforts to attract officer candidates from minority communities in Seattle and expanding career-advancement opportunities for current officers.

The city is negotiating a contract with the Seattle Police Officers Guild, and Harrell suggested retention bonuses or other economic incentives would likely be part of those negotiations.

Interim Police Chief Adrian Diaz said the department will need to keep the officers it has and add 500 over the next five years. So far this year, though, 109 have left, while fewer than three dozen. Half of the new hires this year are people of color, Diaz said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Ring footage to police w/out user consent</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Amazon-handed-Ring-footage-to-police-without-user-17302317.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Amazon-handed-Ring-footage-to-police-without-user-17302317.php</a>
GIST	<p>Amazon has provided Ring doorbell footage to law enforcement 11 times this year without the user's permission, a revelation that's bound to raise more privacy and civil liberty concerns about its video-sharing agreements with police departments across the country.</p> <p>The disclosure came in a letter from the company that was made public Wednesday by U.S. Sen. Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat who sent a separate letter to Amazon last month questioning Ring's surveillance practices and engagement with law enforcement.</p> <p>Ring has said before it will not share customer information with police without consent, a warrant or due to “an exigent or emergency” circumstance. The 11 videos shared this year fell under the emergency provision, Amazon's letter said, the first time the company publicly shared such information. The letter, dated July 1, did not say which videos were shared with police.</p> <p>Brian Huseman, Amazon's vice president for public policy, wrote in the letter that in each instance, “Ring made a good-faith determination that there was an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to a person requiring disclosure of information without delay.”</p> <p>In such cases, Huseman wrote Ring “reserves the right to respond immediately to urgent law enforcement requests for information,” adding the company makes a determination as to when to share video footage</p>

without user consent based on information provided to it in an emergency request form and circumstances described by law enforcement.

Some prior requests from law enforcement have raised concerns about how police might be attempting to use Ring footage. Last year, the non-profit digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation reported the Los Angeles Police Department requested Ring footage of Black Lives Matter protests in 2020.

In a statement, Markey's office said the findings show a close relationship between Ring and law enforcement and a proliferation of police using the platform.

Amazon said in its letter 2,161 law enforcement agencies are enrolled in Ring's Neighbors app, a forum for residents to share suspicious videos captured by their home security cameras. That number represents a five-fold increase since November 2019, according to the senator's office.

"As my ongoing investigation into Amazon illustrates, it has become increasingly difficult for the public to move, assemble, and converse in public without being tracked and recorded," Markey said in a statement.

Among other things, the senator's statement also criticized the company for not clarifying the distance Ring products can capture audio recordings. The company had said in its response letter what Ring captures "depends on many conditions, including device placement and environmental conditions."

The Ring disclosure comes as Amazon is facing broader antitrust scrutiny in Congress about its ecommerce business, and accusations of undercutting merchants that sell on its platform by making "knock-offs," or very similar products, and boosting their presence on its site. Markey and several other Democratic lawmakers are also pushing for a bill that prohibits the use of biometric technology by federal agencies and tie federal grant funding to states and localities on the condition they put a moratorium on the use of such technology.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 US: Russia committed war crimes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/14/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#the-us-accuses-russia-of-war-crimes-specifying-hundreds-of-thousands-of-ukrainian-deportations">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/14/world/russia-ukraine-war-news#the-us-accuses-russia-of-war-crimes-specifying-hundreds-of-thousands-of-ukrainian-deportations</a>
GIST	<p>Russian authorities have "interrogated, detained, and forcibly deported" between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens, including 260,000 children, from their homes into Russian territory, often to isolated regions in the Far East, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken <a href="#">said in a statement</a> on Wednesday.</p> <p>"The unlawful transfer and deportation of protected persons," Mr. Blinken said, "is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians and is a war crime."</p> <p>Mr. Blinken noted that he was releasing the statement on the eve of the Ukraine Accountability Conference, which is being held on Thursday in The Hague. <a href="#">The conference's website</a> says that its purpose is "to ensure that war crimes committed during the war in Ukraine will not go unpunished." Its hosts are the Dutch government, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the European Commission.</p> <p>Russia has acknowledged that 1.5 million Ukrainians are now in Russia, but asserted that they were evacuated for their own safety.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials have long sounded the alarm on Russia's <a href="#">deportations</a>, with President Volodymyr Zelensky <a href="#">last month describing</a> them as "one of Russia's most heinous war crimes." Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he said, the deportations have included more than 200,000 children.</p>



[Testimonies given to The New York Times and other news outlets](#) by deportees who escaped Russia have included descriptions filtration sites and accounts of interrogations, of beatings and torture of those deemed to have ties to Ukraine’s armed forces, and of disappearances.

European officials have described the filtration sites as being set up in as schools, sports centers and cultural institutions in parts of Ukraine recently seized by Russian forces.

From those sites, many Ukrainians have been transported to destinations across Russia — often to regions far from Ukraine, near China or Japan, according to the testimonies.

Some U.S. officials have previously raised concerns about [deportations](#), but only gave vague assessments of the scale.

Michael Carpenter, the United States ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, [said during a speech in Vienna in May](#) that many eyewitnesses had given detailed accounts of Russia’s “brutal interrogations” in filtration camps that at least several thousand Ukrainians had been forced into, and deportations on the order of at least tens of thousands.

Mr. Blinken’s statement on Wednesday also noted reports that indicated Russian forces were “deliberately” separating Ukrainian children from their parents and abducting others from orphanages. Eyewitnesses and survivors, the statement said, described “frequent threats, harassment, and incidents of torture by Russian security forces.”

In some instances, the statement said, Ukrainian’s passports were confiscated, and they were issued with Russian passports instead, “in an apparent effort to change the demographic makeup of parts of Ukraine.”

There was also mounting evidence, the statement said, that Russian authorities were “detaining or disappearing thousands of Ukrainian civilians” who did not pass through the filtration process, including those affiliated with the Ukrainian Army, territorial defense forces, media, government and civil society groups.

The statement said that reports also indicated that Russian authorities had transported tens of thousands of people to detention facilities inside Russian-controlled Donetsk, where many were tortured. According to reports, it said, others had been “summarily executed, consistent with evidence of Russian atrocities committed in Bucha, Mariupol, and other locations in Ukraine.”

Mr. Blinken’s statement said that the United States was calling for an immediate halt to the deportations and for Russian authorities to release those detained and to allow them to return home. Independent outside observers, the statement said, should be permitted to access so-called filtration facilities, which serve as a way station for many deportations, as well as the places where Ukrainians have been deported to.

“President Putin and his government will not be able to engage in these systematic abuses with impunity,” the statement said. “Accountability is imperative.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Inflation hits record 10.1% in Seattle</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/economy/inflation-hits-record-10-1-in-seattle-as-prices-keep-climbing/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/economy/inflation-hits-record-10-1-in-seattle-as-prices-keep-climbing/</a>
GIST	<p>Inflation in the Seattle metro area hit a four-decade high in June as prices for groceries, gas and basic essentials continued to climb, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.</p> <p>While <a href="#">U.S. consumer prices</a> hit a four-decade high last month at 9.1%, the increase in the Seattle area was even more extreme, statistics released Wednesday showed.</p>

Compared to June 2021, Seattle's Consumer Price Index, a shorthand measure for the cost of living, grew 10.1%, the largest increase on record since the bureau began collecting June data for Seattle in 1998. The national inflation rate is higher than it has been since 1981.

This continues [the trend of accelerated price increases since December 2021](#) that is also [eating into wage gains recorded in the Seattle area](#). Since April, consumer prices rose 3.2%.

Goods and services prices monitored in the index are everyday items, ranging from groceries to appliances, transportation or housing — often referred to as a market basket of goods and services. The items are weighted in a monthly or annual household budget to measure the inflation rate, or how the increase in prices affects the average person.

While prices for gas, food and beverages increased, prices of less volatile items, like household furnishings, continued to swell as did housing, used cars and trucks and medical care. Only the price of clothing witnessed a minor decline.

Considering the rising cost of daily necessities and the demographics of who is more likely to rent or struggle to purchase a home, a new car or medical insurance, this data offers further evidence that Seattle's inflation is particularly impacting low and middle-income households and communities of color.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Arriving migrants overwhelm D.C. aid groups</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/07/13/dc-migrants-buses-texas-union-station/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/07/13/dc-migrants-buses-texas-union-station/</a>
GIST	<p>Aid groups helping migrants coming to D.C. on buses from Texas and Arizona were overwhelmed this week after coronavirus quarantines sidelined many volunteers and area shelters filled up, leaving some of the migrants to sleep at Union Station after they arrived.</p> <p>The buses have been arriving from Texas and Arizona for months, after the Republican governors of those states started offering “voluntary” bus trips to the nation’s capital for migrants caught crossing the border from Mexico.</p> <p>“We were told we were going to be helped here, that somebody was waiting for us,” Andres David Blanco, who left Venezuela a month and a half ago, said in Spanish after he arrived at Union Station on Tuesday night.</p> <p>A network of mutual aid organizations armed with limited resources, and a nonprofit operating with a federal grant have been scrambling to help migrants, while the number of buses arriving in the city continues to rise.</p> <p>That patchwork of aid fell short Tuesday night, after core organizers and volunteers with the Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network advocates were in quarantine after being exposed to the coronavirus while helping migrants over the weekend. SAMU First Response, an international aid organization that has a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant to help the migrants, only operates Wednesday through Saturday.</p> <p>SAMU’s managing director, Tatiana Laborde, said the organization tried to put together a team to find last-minute resources after it became clear Tuesday that there were not enough volunteers to help the incoming migrants.</p> <p>Laborde said in an interview that SAMU does not have capacity to coordinate all the buses. “We are increasing our capacity, but all the agencies involved know that this is going to take time,” she said. Out of the roughly 15 buses arriving every week, the organization can handle half.</p> <p>SAMU’s FEMA grant is enough to provide emergency aid for around 2,000 migrants a month, but the number has doubled in the last weeks.</p>

SAMU has been operating at a shelter located in Montgomery County, Md., where Laborde said they prioritize migrant families from Arizona who often arrive with children. The shelter only has capacity for 50 people who are allowed to stay no more than three days. On Wednesday morning, Laborde said, the shelter was already full.

Laborde said the organization has initiated conversation with D.C. officials to secure a permanent place near Union Station, but the conversation “has not materialized” into concrete actions. The Migrant Solidarity Network has also asked for access to respite centers, coronavirus isolation hotels, and short-term housing for the migrants.

A spokeswoman for Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) did not immediately comment.

D.C. Council member Brienne K. Nadeau (D-Ward 1) said it appeared that SAMU was still working out kinks in its operations, underscoring the importance of a stronger response from local officials.

“SAMU has a learning curve, they have a deep bench of people who are good at emergency response and serving refugees, but haven’t done that work in D.C. before,” Nadeau said. “If governments across the region are depending on SAMU to get this done, it’s not feasible.”

She added, “as stretched thin as our government is right now, we probably need more boots on the ground with SAMU until they have things up and running.”

Nadeau, who is a chairwoman for the Region Forward Coalition at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, said local leaders who are part of the group will convene next week to determine exactly what officials and nonprofits, including SAMU, can do to increase support for those arriving in the city.

In a statement released Wednesday, the Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network said they took a two-day break following the coronavirus exposure, but that the group was “exhausted” and needed help.

“DMV area community organizations and volunteers have shown up every day for over three months to support migrants but we are exhausted, burned out, and do not have the resources that the government does,” said Madhvi Bahl, from Sanctuary DMV and Free Them All VA.

Meanwhile, many of the migrants who arrived Tuesday night spent the night inside Union Station. Shelters for families were not available Tuesday night, and the ones that could take in migrants could only receive male individuals.

Venezuelans Ángeles Pinto León, 22, and Pedro José Sánchez, 30, and their two children left Perú two months ago. They reached the border last Wednesday and were told at a shelter in Texas that they could be transported in a bus free to D.C.

They said the place they had secured in Richmond is no longer available. Now they are seeking shelter or a home to stay in D.C.

Migrants sit inside Union Station after their arrival. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades for The Washington Post) At 9 p.m., volunteer Matthew Burwick, a Venezuelan activist who said he was at the site helping SAMU, answering questions and handing out granola bars and water, coordinated transportation for four families and seven children to SAMU’s shelter in Montgomery County. On Wednesday morning, Pinto León, who was taken to the shelter, said she was told she could stay there for a few days, but she hasn’t found a permanent place to stay.

Several migrants are trying to reach other states like New York, Florida or Georgia, but many don’t have anywhere to go and are hoping the city can offer them a fresh start.

	<p>“Do you know where 14th and U is?” Leonardo Javier León, 26, asked in Spanish. “I was told there are many restaurants there where I can apply for a job.”</p> <p>“I don’t have anybody here, but I have the will to work,” said León, who worked as a sous-chef in Venezuela.</p> <p>Some, like asylum-seeker Eduardo Antonio Mendoza, are facing last-minute cancellations by friends or sponsors.</p> <p>“I called my friend this evening, but he told me he can’t receive me anymore,” Mendoza, who traveled from Nicaragua and was planning to go to New York, said in Spanish.</p> <p>Mendoza said he took the bus from Texas because it was on the way to New York, but now that he has nowhere to go, he’s glad he ended up in D.C.</p> <p>“I’d have been lost there,” he said.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Mayor hiring incentives for 500 cops in 5yrs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/harrell-proposes-new-hiring-incentives-for-seattle-police-aims-to-add-500-officers-in-next-5-years/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/harrell-proposes-new-hiring-incentives-for-seattle-police-aims-to-add-500-officers-in-next-5-years/</a>
GIST	<p>In an attempt to hire 500 new police officers in the next five years, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell wants to spend \$2 million on recruitment to alleviate what he described as a “crisis level” police staffing shortage.</p> <p><a href="#">Harrell’s plan</a> would offer up to \$30,000 in hiring incentives for lateral transfers and \$7,500 for new recruits, to make the department more competitive with other jurisdictions and bring the sworn staffing to 1,450 from its current 954.</p> <p>“We’re going to get a little more sophisticated in our approach, because, as you well know, in the private sector, companies spend a lot of money in advertising and recruiting,” Harrell said at a news conference alongside interim police Chief Adrian Diaz, who endorsed the plan.</p> <p>Over the last decade, the number of sworn officers at SPD has dropped from around 1,300 from 2013-19 to under 1,000 in 2022, with more than 400 resignations and retirements in since 2020. While SPD staffing has been fully funded in that time, the department has struggled to recruit quickly enough to keep up with attrition.</p> <p>Many police departments nationwide, particularly in larger cities, have faced staffing shortages amid the strain of the COVID-19 pandemic and against the backdrop of 2020’s racial justice protests and debate over the role of law enforcement. With less staff, SPD says they have been unable to perform some functions of their job, and <a href="#">have quit investigating some major crimes</a> such as adult sexual assault cases.</p> <p>This summer, council members and the mayor have considered using some of the roughly \$4.5 million in unspent <a href="#">salary savings budgeted for positions that the department cannot fill to fund incentives for new and existing officers</a>.</p> <p>City Council members began dialing up recruitment budgeting in May, allowing the department to spend over \$1 million in salary savings — which were previously restricted under a 2022 budget proviso — for police hiring and retention efforts. Now, the mayor wants to roughly double that effort.</p> <p>A new ordinance submitted to the council by the mayor’s office on Wednesday would free up an additional \$1 million in SPD salary savings for “costs related to recruitment and retention of officers in SPD.” The funding would include salary and benefits for four new human resources employees, plus up to \$650,000 for the hiring incentives and \$150,000 for the ongoing search for a permanent police chief.</p>

The [salary range for most SPD officers is between about](#) \$83,000 and \$109,000, before overtime, bonuses or other additional pay.

For existing officers, Harrell’s plan also commits to providing education funding and retention incentives, though the specifics haven’t been determined due to ongoing police union negotiations.

“There is a comprehensive economic package [for retention], but some of that is in negotiation, so I can’t highlight a dollar amount for that very specific piece of it,” Diaz said.

Harrell said it’s unlikely the negotiations will be completed before the passage of the city’s 2023 budget in November.

Lisa Herbold, chair of the council’s Public Safety and Human Services Committee, thanked Harrell and Diaz for the proposal in a statement Wednesday, noting she supports hiring more police but also wants to see investments into alternative responses that do not require police presence.

Last year, an analysis determined that 12% of emergency calls — such as calls about a “person down” and some low-priority welfare checks — should be looked at as a good starting point for a program that uses unarmed community responders, rather than police. The analysis prompted then-Mayor Jenny Durkan and other city officials [to announce plans last summer for a special response team](#) that would focus on calls that are neither criminal nor medical emergencies, though that team has not yet launched.

Citing the study, commissioned by the council on the heels of the 2020 racial justice protests, Herbold said Wednesday the city has to focus on bolstering alternative response, which will in turn benefit overworked officers.

“A critical part of the long-term solution is to lessen the load on officers and create new, more effective ways of responding to calls that do not require an armed police response,” Herbold said. “We can’t keep asking police officers to direct traffic and help people in mental health crises when we don’t have enough officers to investigate sexual assaults or respond to 911 calls.”

But Herbold says the mayor’s office is not moving fast enough on these alternative programs.

“Seattle is falling behind on its commitments to create policing alternatives, and those impacts are being felt by community members who are not getting the service they deserve and by police officers who are stretched too thin,” she said.

A spokesperson for Harrell said the mayor is “fully committed” to improving alternative responses but that those improvements can’t be done “overnight.”

“This is not an either/or — ensuring effective public safety requires innovative alternate responses and a fully staffed police department,” Communications Director Jamie Housen said in response to Herbold. “Today, SPD is in a staffing crisis that demands urgent action. Response times to Priority 1 and 2 calls — where lives are on the line — continue to deteriorate because we do not have enough officers.”

Harrell said Wednesday that he was optimistic the recruitment plan would be adopted by the council. He said he sought council approval, rather than establishing police pay incentives in an [executive order like his predecessor](#), in the interest of being collaborative. Durkan’s October [emergency order](#) authorized bonuses of up to \$10,000 for new recruits and up to \$25,000 for transfers from other jurisdictions.

The Downtown Seattle Association, a nonprofit group that represents downtown business interests and [has been calling for crime reduction](#), commended Harrell’s plan.

“This plan is a thoughtful approach aimed at ensuring Seattle has the right officers, and not just a deeper roster,” the group said in a statement Wednesday.

HEADLINE	07/13 China Covid authoritarianism, not vaccine
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/chinas-covid-authoritarianism-meets-red-line-at-vaccine-mandates/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/chinas-covid-authoritarianism-meets-red-line-at-vaccine-mandates/</a>
GIST	<p>President Xi Jinping has made use of his authoritarian power in China to impose the world's strictest controls against COVID-19. But there's one pandemic measure he hasn't pushed: vaccines.</p> <p>China's first attempt at a vaccine mandate was abruptly scrapped last week within days of being announced by municipal officials in Beijing. The plan to stop people entering public venues without proof of vaccination sparked an outcry online, with Chinese social media users calling it an illegal cap on their freedoms and questioning how effective the vaccines were against immune-evasive variants.</p> <p>Vaccine mandates have emerged as a surprise red line for the ruling Communist Party, which up until a few years ago controlled citizens' reproductive rights through its one child-policy and is steaming ahead with other controversial virus curbs, such as widespread tracking of individuals through their phones, mass testing and border curbs.</p> <p>Joerg Wuttke, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, slammed Beijing's vaccine retreat, saying it undermined the possibility of an exit from COVID Zero.</p> <p>"This sudden policy U-turn will discourage other cities in China from pursuing an effective vaccination campaign that will protect the population from a virus that is simply not going away," he said. "China's economy will continue to suffer."</p> <p>A lengthy lockdown in Shanghai this year saw angry residents barricaded into their homes short on food, pets of infected people killed and widespread economic hardship. In that case, officials cited pandemic prevention laws to force residents into compliance and censored calls for change.</p> <p>Still, China's leadership has so far been unwilling to throw its political capital or the heft of the security state behind vaccines, despite trumpeting its supply of homegrown shots to other nations and having no road map for exiting COVID Zero without full coverage. It's unclear if that's because Xi's government is unwilling to exercise its power or a lack of consensus about the efficacy of vaccines.</p> <p>Last month, Xi warned that relying on "herd immunity" would lead to "unimaginable" consequences for a nation of China's size, where zero virus cases, let alone deaths, are tolerated. Chinese leaders haven't confirmed whether they've even had shots, in contrast with leaders as varied as US President Joe Biden and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who both got vaccinated on camera in 2020.</p> <p>The Chinese Foreign Ministry has declined to comment on Xi's vaccination status. Xi's own statements on vaccines have focused on demands to make them a "global public good," and on advances in science, rather than calls for the broader population at home to take them.</p> <p>Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow for global health at the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, said the absence of an explicit signal from Xi had given Beijing authorities leeway to introduce their own policy — an approach he calls "fragmented authoritarianism."</p> <p>"It's likely that when the vaccine mandate became known there wasn't just public resistance, they also faced opposition from the government," he said, adding that the U-turn reflected a lack of broad political consensus on vaccines.</p> <p>"This impasse can only be broken with the personal intervention by the top leader," Huang added. "If the top leader is showing a lukewarm attitude that policy impasse will continue."</p> <p>China was one of the first countries to approve a homegrown vaccine in December 2020. The Asian giant has since shipped some 2.1 billion doses globally in a push to win diplomatic favor, and got 90% of its 1.4 billion people fully vaccinated.</p>



Yet, that figure falls dramatically among the elderly. Only half those age 80 and above were fully immunized in March, the most recent national numbers. Some 500 people died in Shanghai earlier this year, but the city's elderly still didn't get the shot in the weeks after the lockdown, despite being offered cash rewards.

The elderly are even now advised by some doctors to avoid shots if they have chronic illness. Authorities' reluctance to push vaccinations in this demographic contrasts with their strict enforcement of mass lockdowns and testing, and the pressure put on students and employees at state-owned enterprises to get vaccinated.

Furthermore, Wu Liangyou, deputy director of the National Health Commission's Disease Control Bureau, pledged in October that vaccination should be voluntary — something social media users in Beijing reminded officials of last week. An article posted on "Wuyou Zhixiang," a prominent online platform for China's Maoist leftists, questioned whether authorities would somehow profit from a mandate, suggesting without evidence there was collusion with manufacturers.

That sort of public pushback — as Xi prepares to win a landmark third term in office at a twice-a-decade political summit this year — would likely deter party officials jostling for promotion from pushing any policy the central government has backed.

"There is already palpable public frustration with the COVID Zero approach and slower economic growth," said Chong Ja Ian, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore's political science department. "This could result in more popular resistance to public health measures in the lead-up to the 20th party congress, and increase the risk of infections."

Omicron's immune escape from both China's inactivated vaccines and foreign mRNA shots it has made it impossible for the world's second-largest economy to rely on vaccines to exit COVID Zero.

Instead, China's pandemic controls are relying on mass testing, lockdowns and border curbs that have caused economists to predict the country will miss its ambitious target for annual GDP growth of about 5.5%. "It is hard to resist the conclusion that the authorities think the effectiveness of their lockdowns mean vaccines are not that important," Richard McGregor, senior fellow for East Asia at the Lowy Institute, said.

For Scott Rosenstein, senior public health adviser at the Eurasia Group, the vaccines were also less useful to Xi on a soft-power and diplomatic basis, due to their lower efficacy and a surplus of other shots on the market.

"The Chinese leadership realized from the beginning that these vaccines don't do a great job at stopping transmission, and that was enough to de-prioritize vaccination," he said. "It seems like China's leaders are genuinely reluctant to put too much stock in vaccination."

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Gates gives \$20B; stem significant suffering</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/bill-gates-gives-20-billion-to-stem-significant-suffering/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/bill-gates-gives-20-billion-to-stem-significant-suffering/</a>
GIST	<p>Bill Gates, concerned about the "significant suffering" caused by global setbacks including the COVID-19 pandemic, announced Wednesday that he will donate \$20 billion to his foundation so it can increase its annual spending.</p> <p>The donation, combined with longtime board member Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett's \$3.1 billion gift last month, brings The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's endowment to approximately \$70 billion, making it one of the largest, if not the largest in the world, depending on daily stock valuations. In an essay on the foundation's website, Bill Gates said he hopes "others in positions of great wealth and privilege will step up in this moment too."</p>

The Gates Foundation plans to raise its annual budget by 50% over pre-pandemic levels to about \$9 billion by 2026. The foundation hopes the increased spending will improve education, reduce poverty and reinstate the global progress toward ending preventable disease and achieving gender equality that has been halted in recent years.

According to the United Nations Development Program, 71 million people have been pushed into poverty since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, mainly due to food and energy price surges. Households in the Balkans, the Caspian Sea region and Sub-Saharan Africa have been hit particularly hard. The U.N. World Food Program reports that the number of acutely hungry people is now 345 million, up 25% since the start of the war in Ukraine.

"Despite huge global setbacks in the past few years, I see incredible heroism and sacrifice all over the world and I believe progress is possible," Bill Gates, the foundation's co-chair, said in a statement. "But the great crises of our time require all of us to do more... I hope by giving more, we can mitigate some of the suffering people are facing right now and help fulfill the foundation's vision to give every person the chance to live a healthy and productive life."

Co-chair Melinda French Gates said the additional spending will help provide a more "fair and inclusive recovery."

"Philanthropy has a unique role to play in helping people around the world recover from the pandemic and rebuild the underlying systems that left so many so vulnerable to begin with," French Gates said in a statement.

At the "Hunger Pains: The Growing Global Food Crisis" webinar Monday, Gates Foundation CEO Mark Suzman said two decades of advances have been halted by the current global crises spawned by the Russian invasion. However, the growth in agricultural productivity around the world remains mostly in place.

"We have the tools. We have the science. We have the knowledge," Suzman said. "What we need is the political will and the resources."

Those resources include donations from philanthropic organizations. Gates Foundation invests heavily in connecting agricultural advancements with the right countries, offering drought-resistant maize seeds or flood-resistant rice to the areas that can use them most, Suzman said.

However, philanthropy has its limitations, he added. Suzman said the response from the world's wealthiest countries has not only fallen short of what is currently needed, but it has even fallen short of what the world provided a decade ago during a similar crisis. "This is our most critical area of opportunity for human solidarity," he said. "That actually has knock-on effects to provide better political stability and broader economic growth, which is what I think everybody wants to see."

In his essay, Bill Gates wrote that polarization in the United States makes battling global crises tougher. "The political divide limits our political capacity for dialogue, compromise, and cooperation and thwarts the bold leadership required both domestically and internationally to tackle these threats," he wrote. "Polarization is forcing us to look backwards and fight again for basic human rights, social justice, and democratic norms."

While achieving gender equality has long been one of the foundation's primary investment areas, in his essay, Bill Gates singled out the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* as "a huge setback for gender equality, for women's health, and for overall human progress."

"The potential for even further regression is scary," he added. "It will put lives at risk for women, people of color, and anyone living on the margins."

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Biden nominates 2 for federal judges</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/biden-nominates-two-more-judges-for-western-washington/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/biden-nominates-two-more-judges-for-western-washington/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — President Joe Biden on Wednesday made two more nominations for the federal bench in western Washington state: Seattle lawyers Jamal Whitehead and Kymberly Evanson.</p> <p>Whitehead is a civil litigator with the firm Schroeter Goldmark &amp; Bender, where he focuses on workplace discrimination and unfair labor practices.</p> <p>He recently represented a class of immigration detainees at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma who successfully sued the private prison contractor The GEO Group for back pay, arguing that they should have been granted the minimum wage for cooking, cleaning and other tasks they performed. A federal jury ordered GEO to pay \$17.3 million to more than 10,000 current and former detainees.</p> <p>Whitehead, who is Black and who uses a prosthetic leg, is Biden’s first disabled nominee to the federal bench, said Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, who recommended him and Evanson. Biden has emphasized racial, cultural and professional diversity in his court nominations.</p> <p>“Our federal bench should be filled with judges who are committed to justice and who reflect the diversity of the communities they serve — which is why I am thrilled for Jamal, his family, and the Western District of Washington state,” Murray said in a news release.</p> <p>Evanson is a partner at Pacifica Law Group. She has represented state, municipal, private and nonprofit clients on constitutional, electoral, public disclosure and administrative issues, including the First Amendment and the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p> <p>According to Murray, Evanson has also done significant amounts of pro bono work, with a focus in recent years on clemency cases. Murray called her “steadfast in her commitment to fairness and to justice, especially in her pro bono practice and her work on First Amendment cases.”</p> <p>Evanson, who is white, received her undergraduate degree from Seattle University and her law degree from Georgetown University.</p> <p>Whitehead received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Washington and his law degree from the Seattle University School of Law.</p> <p>Five of Biden’s nominees to the federal bench in Washington state have been confirmed by the Senate: Tana Lin, the state’s first Asian American federal judge and a former public defender and civil rights lawyer; Lauren King, a tribal law expert who is Washington’s first Native American federal judge; John Chun, who is also Asian American; David Estudillo, the son of Mexican immigrants and a former immigration attorney; and Kit Dimke, who is serving in the Eastern District of Washington.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Forecast: Covid hospitalizations to rise</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-hospitalizations-forecast-increase-amid-concerns-omicron-subvariants/story?id=86760359">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/covid-hospitalizations-forecast-increase-amid-concerns-omicron-subvariants/story?id=86760359</a>
GIST	<p>For the first time since May, COVID-19-related hospital admissions are forecasted to increase again in the U.S., as highly infectious omicron subvariants continue to spread, according to updated forecasting models used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.</p> <p>The models show that nearly 40 states and territories are currently projected to see increases in new hospitalizations over the next two weeks. States in the South, including Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, are expected to see the greatest increases in hospitalizations.</p>

Nationally, between 3,200 to 13,800 daily confirmed COVID-19 hospital admissions are expected to be reported on Aug. 5. As of Wednesday, the U.S. is reporting nearly 5,800 virus-related hospital admissions each day, according to the CDC.

Hospitalization levels have already been increasing, with nearly 40,000 virus-positive Americans currently hospitalized, according to federal data. Totals are more than double the level they were at this time last summer, when the delta surge was beginning to emerge, and a growing number of COVID-19 positive people are also showing up to emergency departments, data shows.

In the South, where many states are forecasted to see notable increases, hospital admissions have risen by more than 20% in the last week.

Although the overall total remains significantly lower than at the nation's peak, when more than 160,000 patients were hospitalized with the virus, hospitalizations are still at their highest point since early March.

The forecast also predicts that virus-related deaths will have either a stable or an uncertain trend in the next four weeks.

Even so, more than 5,700 deaths are still expected to occur nationally over the next two weeks. Texas, Oklahoma and California are projected to see the largest death tolls in the weeks to come.

"Deaths are still around 300, but hospitalizations are ticking up. This is something you don't want to panic about, but we really need to pay attention to it because there are things that we can do to blunt that," Dr. Anthony Fauci, a senior adviser to the president on the pandemic, told CNN on Wednesday.

Fauci and other federal health officials have been raising the alarm about omicron subvariant BA.5, which they say has been causing a resurgence of infections.

The U.S. is currently reporting more than 118,000 new cases a day, marking the country's highest daily infection average since mid-February.

Fauci said the current reported case total is likely a "gross underestimate" as the majority of Americans are testing with home kits and not reporting their results to their local jurisdictions.

BA.5 is now the dominant variant in the U.S, accounting for an estimated 65% of new cases in the country. Scientists say it does appear to have a transmission advantage over the original omicron strain, although they do not believe it is more severe than prior strains.

"[BA.5] is certainly the most immune evasive. What we're seeing is people who were previously infected getting reinfected at high rates, people who were vaccinated last year having a ton of breakthrough infections. It's something we're paying a lot of attention to," White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha told ABC News' George Stephanopoulos on "Good Morning America" Wednesday.

However, Jha said the vaccines and boosters are still helping blunt the impact of severe disease.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Experts rue simple steps not taken
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/experts-rue-simple-steps-latest-covid-surge-86769318">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/experts-rue-simple-steps-latest-covid-surge-86769318</a>
GIST	<p>With new omicron variants again driving COVID-19 hospital admissions and deaths higher in recent weeks, states and cities are rethinking their responses and the White House is stepping up efforts to alert the public.</p> <p>Some experts said the warnings are too little, too late.</p>

The highly transmissible BA.5 variant now accounts for 65% of cases with its cousin BA.4 contributing another 16%. The variants have shown a remarkable ability to get around the protection offered by infection and vaccination.

“It’s well past the time when the warning could have been put out there,” said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, who has called BA.5 “the worst variant yet.”

Global trends for the two mutants have been apparent for weeks, experts said — they quickly out-compete older variants and push cases higher wherever they appear. Yet Americans have tossed off their masks and jumped back into travel and social gatherings. And they have largely ignored booster shots, which protect against COVID-19's worst outcomes. Courts have blocked federal mask and vaccine mandates, tying the hands of U.S. officials.

“We learn a lot from how the virus is acting elsewhere and we should apply the knowledge here,” said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle.

White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha appeared on morning TV on Wednesday urging booster shots and renewed vigilance. Yet Mokdad said federal health officials need to be push harder on masks indoors, early detection and prompt antiviral treatment.

“They are not doing all that they can,” Mokdad said.

The administration’s challenge, in the view of the White House, is not their messaging, but people’s willingness to hear it — due to pandemic fatigue and the politicization of the virus response.

For months, the White House has encouraged Americans to make use of free or cheap at-home rapid tests to detect the virus, as well as the free and effective antiviral treatment Paxlovid that protects against serious illness and death. On Tuesday, the White House response team called on all adults 50 and older to urgently get a booster if they haven’t yet this year — and dissuaded people from waiting for the next generation of shots expected in the fall when they can roll up their sleeves and get some protection now.

Los Angeles County, the nation's largest by population, is facing a return to a broad indoor mask mandate if current trends in hospital admissions continue, health director Barbara Ferrer told county supervisors Tuesday.

“I do recognize that when we return to universal indoor masking to reduce high spread, for many this will feel like a step backwards,” Ferrer said. But she stressed that requiring masks “helps us to reduce risk.”

LA County has long required masks in some indoor spaces, including health care facilities, Metro trains and buses, airports, jails and homeless shelters. A universal mandate would expand the requirement to all indoor public spaces, including shared offices, manufacturing facilities, warehouses, retail stores, restaurants and bars, theaters and schools.

Sharon Fayette ripped off her mask the moment she stepped out of a Lyft ride in LA and groaned when informed another universal mask requirement might be coming. “Oh man, when will it end?” she wondered about the pandemic.

Fayette said she was exhausted by shifting regulations and dubious another mandate would be followed by most residents. “I just think people are over it, over all the rules,” she said.

The nation’s brief lull in COVID deaths has reversed. Last month, daily deaths were falling, though they never matched last year’s low, and deaths are now heading up again.

The seven-day average for daily deaths in the U.S. rose 26% over the past two weeks to 489 on July 12.

The coronavirus is not killing nearly as many as it was last fall and winter, and experts do not expect death to reach those levels again soon. But hundreds of daily deaths for a summertime respiratory illness would normally be jaw-dropping, said Andrew Noymer, a public health professor at the University of California, Irvine. He noted that in Orange County, California, 46 people died of COVID-19 in June.

“That would be all hands on deck,” Noymer said. “People would be like, ‘There’s this crazy new flu that’s killing people in June.’”

Instead, simple, proven precautions are not being taken. Vaccinations, including booster shots for those eligible, lower the risk of hospitalization and death — even against the latest variants. But less than half of all eligible U.S. adults have gotten a single booster shot, and only about 1 in 4 Americans age 50 and older who are eligible for a second booster have received one.

“This has been a botched booster campaign,” Topol said, noting that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still uses the term “fully vaccinated” for people with two shots of Moderna or Pfizer. “They haven’t gotten across that two shots is totally inadequate,” he said.

Noymer said if he were in charge of the nation's COVID response he would level with the American people in an effort to get their attention in this third year of the pandemic. He would tell Americans to take it seriously, mask indoors and “until we get better vaccines, there’s going to be a new normal of a disease that kills over 100,000 Americans a year and impacts life expectancy.”

That message probably wouldn’t fly for political reasons, Noymer acknowledged.

It also might not fly with people who are tired of taking precautions after more than two years of the pandemic. Valerie Walker of New Hope, Pennsylvania, is mindful of the latest surge but is hardly alarmed.

“I was definitely concerned back then,” she said of the pandemic's early days, with images of body bags on nightly news broadcasts. “Now there’s fatigue, things were getting better and there was a vaccine. So I would say from a scale between one and 10, I’m probably at a four.”

Even with two friends now sick with the virus, and her husband recently recovered, Walker says she has bigger problems.

“Sometimes when I think about it I still put a mask on when I go into a store, but honestly, it is not a daily thought for me,” she said.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Wildfires scorch Europe; extreme heat wave</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/firefighters-battle-wildfires-portugal-france-86738484">https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/firefighters-battle-wildfires-portugal-france-86738484</a>
GIST	<p>LISBON, Portugal -- A spate of wildfires is scorching parts of Europe, with firefighters battling blazes in Portugal, Spain, Croatia and southern France on Wednesday amid an unusual heat wave that authorities are linking to climate change.</p> <p>In Portugal, Civil Protection commander André Fernandes said multiple fires have caused the evacuation of more than 600 people. About 120 people needed medical treatment, with two people — one civilian and one firefighter — suffering serious injuries, Fernandes said.</p> <p>Water-dumping planes helped 1,300 firefighters combat the worst of the blazes in the nation’s central area, while another 1,000 worked to bring other fires under control.</p> <p>The European heat wave is also sparking flames in Spain and France — and in Turkey at the other end of the Mediterranean.</p>



More than 800 firefighters battled two wildfires in the region outside Bordeaux in southwest France, according to the regional emergency service. The fires began Tuesday near the towns of Landiras and La Teste-de-Buch, and firefighters hadn't been able to contain them by Wednesday morning.

About 6,500 people have been evacuated from campgrounds and villages in the forested area. The number of injuries is unclear. The two fires have destroyed more than 1,800 hectares (4,400 acres) of terrain. Images from firefighters showed flames racing through thickets of trees and grassland, fanned by strong winds, and smoke blackening the horizon.

The regional administration banned activity in forested areas at risk. Several regions in southern France are on fire alert because of hot, dry weather and high winds. Wildfires swept through the Gard region in southeast France last week.

Portugal has long experienced fatal forest fires. In 2017, wildfires killed more than 100 people. No one has died from a wildfire since then as Portugal improved its forest management and firefighting strategies.

Last year, Portugal recorded its lowest number of wildfires since 2011. But a mass of hot and dry air blown in by African winds are driving temperatures in the Iberian Peninsula beyond their usual highs.

The Atlantic country, which has been on alert of wildfires since last week, is sweltering under a spike in temperatures that is forecast to send thermometers in the central Alentejo region to 46 C (115 F) on Wednesday and Thursday. Authorities said that 96% of the country was classified at the end of June as being in either “extreme” or “severe” drought.

More than 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) had been consumed alone in the district of Leiria, just north of Lisbon, Mayor Goncalo Lopes told Portuguese state broadcaster RTP.

Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa, who canceled a trip abroad to deal with the emergency, said that better care of woodlands and abandoned farmland was key to protecting them.

“In 2017, the country realized that having enough firefighters is essential, but it is not enough,” Costa said. “We have to get to the root of the problem ... The abandonment of property and its non-management is one of the biggest risk factors for forest fires.”

Neighboring Spain hit highs of 43 C (109.4 F) in several southern cities on Tuesday. Over 400 people were evacuated Tuesday because of a wildfire that has consumed 3,500 hectares (8,600 acres) in western Spain.

Fuelled by strong winds, fires raged along Croatia’s Adriatic Sea coast as well, with the most dramatic situation reported near the town of Sibenik, where water-dropping planes and dozens of firefighters struggled to contain the flames that briefly engulfed some cars and a church tower. Regional N1 television reported that some residents evacuated the area in rubber boats. Fires were also reported near the coastal town of Zadar.

Firefighter Boris Dukić told state HRT television that “it’s hell, we don’t know where to go first.”

European Union officials issued a warning last week that climate change is behind the extremely dry and hot summer so far on the continent, urging local authorities to brace for wildfires.

Cayetano Torres, spokesman for Spain’s national weather forecaster, said that the “unusual” heat wave and lack of rainfall in recent months has created ideal circumstances for fires.

“These are perfect conditions for the propagation of fires, which when you add to that some wind, you have have guaranteed propagation,” he said.

	<p>In southwestern Turkey, a blaze erupted close to the village of Mesudiye, near the Aegean Sea resort of Datca, and was moving toward homes in the area, according to the provincial governor's office. It said at least nine water-dropping helicopters and five planes were deployed to battle the fire.</p> <p>Last summer, blazes that were fed by strong winds and scorching temperatures tore through forests in Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean regions. The wildfires, which killed at least eight people and countless animals, were described as the worst in Turkey's history.</p> <p>President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government came under sharp criticism for its inadequate response and preparedness to fight large-scale wildfires, including a lack of modern firefighting planes.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Sri Lanka turmoil: confusion, anger linger</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sri-lanka-waits-confusion-anger-president-resign-86788915">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/sri-lanka-waits-confusion-anger-president-resign-86788915</a>
GIST	<p>COLOMBO, Sri Lanka -- Military troops were moving Thursday to secure Sri Lanka's parliament building against a takeover by protesters infuriated by the country's economic collapse and the embattled president's failure to resign a day after fleeing the country.</p> <p>With the country sinking into political chaos, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his wife fled to the Maldives on Wednesday aboard an air force jet. He made the prime minister acting president in his absence — a move that further roiled passions among a public that blames Rajapaksa for an economic crisis that has caused severe shortages of food and fuel.</p> <p>Rajapaksa had promised to resign by Wednesday night, and since Sri Lankan presidents are protected from arrest while in power it's likely he planned his departure while he still had constitutional immunity and access to a military jet. It was unclear exactly where he was in the Maldives, an archipelago of hundreds of islands dotted with luxury tourist resorts, and where he planned to travel next.</p> <p>Troops in green military uniforms and camouflage vests arrived by armored personnel carriers at the parliament building, anticipating more protests after a group attempted to storm the entrance the previous day, clashing with police who fended them off with tear gas and batons.</p> <p>Some protesters posted videos on social media pleading with others not to storm the Parliament, fearing an escalation of violence.</p> <p>On Wednesday, protesters who were undeterred by multiple rounds of tear gas scaled the walls to enter the office of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as the crowd outside cheered in support and tossed water bottles to them. Protesters took turns posing at the prime minister's desk or stood on a rooftop terrace waving the Sri Lankan flag.</p> <p>"We need both ... to go home," said Supun Eranga, a 28-year-old civil servant in the crowd on Wednesday. "Ranil couldn't deliver what he promised during his two months, so he should quit. All Ranil did was try to protect the Rajapaksas."</p> <p>Demonstrators also have crowded inside the presidential palace they began occupying over the weekend and are vowing to stay in both buildings to press their demands for a new government. Some set fire to Wickremesinghe's private residence, and his whereabouts were unknown.</p> <p>Wickremesinghe's office has imposed a state of emergency giving broader powers to the military and police. Defense leaders have called for calm and cooperation with security forces — comments that have rankled some lawmakers who insist civilian leaders would be the ones to find a solution.</p> <p>The protesters blame Rajapaksa and his powerful, dynastic family for leading the country into an economic abyss, but they are also furious with Wickremesinghe, whom they accuse of protecting the president. Many believe that his appointment in May alleviated pressure on Rajapaksa to resign.</p>

Both leaders said after the protests escalated over the weekend that they would resign, but Wickremesinghe said he will not leave until a new government is in place. He has urged the speaker of Parliament to find a new prime minister agreeable to both the ruling and opposition parties.

It's unclear when that might happen since the opposition is deeply fractured. But assuming that Rajapaksa resigns as promised, Sri Lankan lawmakers have agreed to elect a new president on July 20 who will serve the remainder of Rajapaksa's term, which ends in 2024. That person could potentially appoint a new prime minister, who would then have to be approved by Parliament.

The political impasse threatens to worsen the bankrupt nation's economic collapse since the absence of an alternative government could delay a hoped-for bailout from the International Monetary Fund. In the meantime, the country is relying on aid from India and China.

Protesters accuse the president and his relatives of siphoning money from government coffers for years and Rajapaksa's administration of hastening the country's collapse by mismanaging the economy.

The family has denied the corruption allegations, but Rajapaksa acknowledged some of his policies contributed to the meltdown.

The shortages of basic necessities have sown despair among Sri Lanka's 22 million people. The country's rapid decline was all the more shocking because, before the recent crisis, the economy had been expanding, with a growing, comfortable middle class.

"Gotabaya resigning is one problem solved — but there are so many more," said Bhasura Wickremesinghe, a 24-year-old student of maritime electrical engineering, who is not related to the prime minister.

He complained that Sri Lankan politics have been dominated for years by "old politicians" who all need to go. "Politics needs to be treated like a job — you need to have qualifications that get you hired, not because of what your last name is," he said, referring to the Rajapaksa family.

After the president fled to the Maldives the whereabouts of other Rajapaksa family members who had served in the government were unclear.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Officer beaten by cops to lead Boston PD</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/officer-beaten-colleagues-lead-boston-police-86744048">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/officer-beaten-colleagues-lead-boston-police-86744048</a>
GIST	<p>BOSTON -- A former Boston police officer who was beaten more than 25 years ago by colleagues who mistook him for a shooting suspect will be the new leader of the city's police department, Mayor Michelle Wu announced Wednesday.</p> <p>Michael Cox, 57, will return to his hometown of Boston after working as the police chief in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to lead the same force he once brought a civil rights case against over his beating by fellow cops. Cox, who is Black, will take over as commissioner next month.</p> <p>Cox described his appointment is an "emotional moment" for him, apologizing during a call with reporters for his voice quivering. He promised to work to diversify the police department — which critics have long complained doesn't look enough like the city it serves — and make sure officers feel supported in their job to protect the community.</p> <p>"I think this is a very exciting time. I think the officers need someone to support them," Cox told reporters Wednesday. "And I'm going to their biggest cheerleader."</p>

Before becoming chief in Ann Arbor in 2019, Cox was part of the Boston police force for 30 years, where he rose through the ranks after fighting for years to get justice over his beating that left him seriously injured at the age of 29.

Cox was working undercover in plainclothes as part of the gang unit in January 1995 when officers got a call about a shooting. Cox, dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt, spotted the suspect and started to chase him. The suspect started to scale a fence and Cox was struck from behind just as he was about to grab the man, Cox said. He was kicked and punched by fellow officers, suffering head injuries and kidney damage.

“It was humiliating what happened to me,” Cox told former Boston Globe reporter Dick Lehr for Lehr's book about the beating: “The Fence: A Police Cover-Up Along Boston’s Racial Divide.”

“There’s no reason to treat anyone like that. And then to just leave them. And if they do it to me — another police officer — would they do it to another person if they got away with it?” Cox said.

Cox has described facing harassment in an effort to silence him after the beating became public despite efforts by his colleagues to cover it up. A department injury report said Cox lost his footing on a frozen puddle, causing him to fall and crack his head.

Cox chose to stay in the police force after what happened to him and try to improve things instead of walking away from a job he loved, he said Wednesday.

“Since then in 1995, I have dedicated my life to making sure that both the Boston police department and policing in general has grown and learned ... to make sure that we have structures and mechanisms in place to make sure that we never repeat that kind of incident against anyone,” Cox told reporters.

The top prosecutor for Boston and surrounding communities, who has known Cox for years, called him “a man of high honor and integrity.”

“The journey of Michael Cox from being beaten by fellow Boston Police officers to his appointment as Commissioner of the Boston Police Department is emblematic of criminal legal reform,” Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden said in an emailed statement.

Cox's tenure in Ann Arbor was marred by claims that he created a hostile work environment, which led to him being briefly placed on administrative leave in 2020.

An investigation found “no evidence that the Chief was behaving in such a way” as to create a hostile work environment. But a report said “there is evidence that people feared retaliation by the Chief, and they had a legitimate basis for that fear, whether or not that was the Chief’s intent.”

He was reinstated less than a month after being placed on leave after being told by the city administration to apologize “for any misunderstandings and poor communications.”

The mayor said the vetting process was intense and that she personally spoke with Ann Arbor's mayor and town administrator about Cox's time there. Those conversations confirmed that he is a “leader of great integrity,” Wu said.

“We are tremendously excited to bring a leader of his experience and wisdom and background to Boston in this role,” she told reporters.

In Boston, Cox spent 15 years in a variety of roles in the police force's command staff, including as the Bureau Chief and Superintendent of the Bureau of Professional Development. He oversaw the Boston Police Academy, the Firearms Training Unit, the Police Cadet Unit, and training for recruits and sworn officers.

	<p>Boston's last commissioner — Dennis White — was fired last year following a bitter battle to keep his job after decades-old domestic violence accusations came to light.</p> <p>White was placed on leave over the allegations, which he denied, just days into his new job. Superintendent-In-Chief Gregory Long has been serving as the acting police commissioner during the search for White's permanent successor.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

## Cyber Awareness

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 China faces surveillance resistance
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/business/china-data-privacy.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/business/china-data-privacy.html</a>
GIST	<p>Chinese artists have staged performances to highlight the ubiquity of surveillance cameras. Privacy activists have filed lawsuits against the collection of facial recognition data. Ordinary citizens and establishment intellectuals alike have pushed back against the abuse of Covid tracking apps by the authorities to curb protests. Internet users have shared tips on how to evade digital monitoring.</p> <p>As China builds up its <a href="#">vast surveillance and security apparatus</a>, it is running up against growing public unease about the lack of safeguards to prevent the theft or misuse of personal data. The ruling Communist Party is keenly aware of the cost to its credibility of any major security lapses: Last week, it moved systematically to squelch news about what was probably the <a href="#">largest known breach</a> of a Chinese government computer system, involving the personal information of as many as one billion citizens.</p> <p>The breach dealt a blow to Beijing, exposing the risks of its <a href="#">expansive efforts</a> to vacuum up enormous amounts of digital and biological information on the daily activities and social connections of its people from social media posts, biometric data, phone records and surveillance videos. The government says these efforts are necessary for public safety: to limit the spread of Covid, for instance, or to catch criminals. But its failure to protect the data exposes citizens to problems like fraud and extortion, and threatens to erode people's willingness to comply with surveillance.</p> <p>"You never know who is going to sell or leak your information," said Jewel Liao, a Shanghai resident whose details were among those released in the leak.</p> <p>"It's just a bit unusual to see that even the police are vulnerable too," Ms. Liao said.</p> <p>China, which has been racing to implement one of the world's toughest data privacy regimes, frequently excoriates companies <a href="#">for mishandling data</a>. But the authorities rarely point fingers at the country's other top collector of personal information: the government itself.</p> <p><a href="#">Security researchers say</a> the leaked database, apparently used by the police in Shanghai, had been left online and unsecured for months. It was exposed after an anonymous user posted in an online forum offering to sell the vast trove of data for 10 Bitcoin, or about \$200,000. The New York Times confirmed parts of a sample of the database released by the anonymous user, who posted under the name ChinaDan.</p> <p>In addition to basic information like names, addresses and ID numbers, the sample also featured details that appeared to be drawn from external databases, like instructions for couriers on where to drop off deliveries, raising questions about how much information private companies share with the authorities. And, of particular concern for many, it also contained intensely personal information, such as police reports that included the names of people accused of rape and domestic violence, as well as private information about political dissidents.</p> <p>The government has sought to erase nearly all discussion of the leak. At a Cabinet meeting chaired by China's premier, Li Keqiang, last week, officials made only a passing reference to the question of privacy,</p>

emphasizing the need to “defend information security” so that the public and businesses could “operate with peace of mind,” according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Last year, the Chinese authorities passed two new laws on data security and privacy, modeled after the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation. The laws were aimed mostly at addressing the collection of private data by companies — and the widespread internet fraud and personal information theft that has emerged as a result.

The government’s efforts to institute safeguards, however, have lagged its own push to collect information. In recent years, The Times has reviewed other [leaked databases](#) used by the police in China that were left online with little to no protection; some contained facial recognition records and ID scans of people in a Muslim ethnic minority region.

Now, there are signs that people are growing wary of the government and public institutions, too, as they see how their own data is being used against them. Last month, a nationwide outcry erupted over the apparent abuse of Covid-19 tracking technology by local authorities.

Protesters [fighting to recover their savings](#) from four rural banks in the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou found that the [mobile apps used to identify and isolate people](#) who might be spreading Covid-19 had turned from green — meaning safe — to red, a designation that would prevent them from moving freely.

“There is no privacy in China,” said Silvia Si, 30, a protester whose health code had turned red. The authorities in Zhengzhou, under pressure to account for the episode, later punished five officials for changing the codes of more than 1,300 customers.

Even when the Covid-19 tracking technologies are used for their stated purpose, more people seem willing to ask if the surveillance is excessive. On Wednesday, a blogger in Beijing [posted on Weibo](#) that he was refusing to wear an electronic bracelet to track his movements while in isolation, saying that the device was an “electronic shackle” and an infringement on his privacy. The post was liked around 60,000 times, and users flooded his post with responses. Many said it reminded them of the treatment of criminals; others called it a ploy to surreptitiously collect personal information. The post was later taken down by censors, the blogger said.

In recent years, individuals have sought to draw attention to privacy concerns. In 2019, a law professor in Hangzhou, a prominent tech hub in eastern China, sued a local zoo for forcing him to submit facial recognition data to enter, the first such lawsuit in China. He won the case.

Starting in late 2020, several Chinese cities began banning neighborhood committees from forcing residents to undergo biometric monitoring to enter their compounds. Around the same time, toilet paper dispensers using facial recognition were removed from public bathrooms in the southern Chinese city of Dongguan following public outrage.

In online forums like Zhihu, a Quora-like platform, Chinese users trade advice on how to evade surveillance (tips include wearing hats and masks, and pointing flashlights at security cameras). Over 60 percent of Chinese people say facial recognition technology has been abused, according to a study of more than 20,000 Chinese jointly conducted in late 2020 by a Chinese think tank and a government task force. More than 80 percent expressed concern about whether and how facial recognition data would be stored.

“The rise of the public’s awareness of data privacy is an inevitable trend,” said Dragon Zheng, an artist based in the southern province of Guangxi whose practice explores the interaction of technology and governance.

In 2016, Mr. Zheng installed security cameras inside a large exhibition hall, which streamed live footage to a monitoring room set up in the center of the hall. Visitors were invited to enter the room, where they could manipulate the cameras and experience what Mr. Zheng called the feeling of “monitoring and being monitored, controlling and being controlled.”



Still, he emphasized that the risks and advantages of technology were not unique to China.

“Technology is like Pandora’s box,” Mr. Zheng said. “Once it’s open, how it is used depends on whose hands it falls into.”

Few Chinese citizens have publicly questioned the government about its collection of personal data. Part of that could be a result of the government’s thorough censorship and the threats to personal safety of criticizing the government. But many residents also see the handover of data as a necessary trade-off for security and convenience.

“There’s always been this split identity when it comes to privacy awareness in China,” said Samm Sacks, a [researcher](#) on technology policy at Yale Law School and New America. “People are far more trusting overall in how government entities handle their personal information and far more suspicious about the corporate sector.”

Legal analysts said any disciplinary actions resulting from the Shanghai police database breach were unlikely to be publicized. There are few mechanisms in place to hold Chinese government agencies responsible for their own data leaks. For many citizens, that lack of recourse has contributed to a sense of resignation.

Occasionally, though, they notch small victories, as Xu Peilin did when she took on her local neighborhood committee last year. She had returned home to her apartment building in Beijing one day to find that the compound wanted residents to submit to a facial recognition scanner to enter.

“It was insane,” said Ms. Xu, 37, a project manager at a start-up company. She said it reminded her of one of her favorite television shows, the British science fiction series Black Mirror.

Ms. Xu badgered her neighborhood committee by telephone and text message until they relented. For now, Ms. Xu said, she can still enter her compound using her key card, though she believed it was only a matter of time until the facial recognition devices became mandatory again.

“All I can do for now,” she said, “is continue to resist on a small scale.”

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Panel: Log4j flaw no ‘significant’ attacks
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/log4j-cyber-safety-review-board-report/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/log4j-cyber-safety-review-board-report/</a>
GIST	<p>A panel of U.S. government officials and private-sector experts tasked with investigating the nation's major cybersecurity failures has concluded that the notorious <a href="#">Log4j internet bug</a> did not prompt any "significant" attacks on critical infrastructure systems.</p> <p>A serious flaw living inside an open-source Java-based software known as "Log4j" shook the world last December when officials estimated that it left hundreds of millions of devices exposed to potential breaches.</p> <p>The fledgling Cyber Safety Review Board, loosely modeled off the National Transportation Safety Board and housed under the purview of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), released the findings of its investigation into the vulnerability on Thursday.</p> <p>Led by Chair Rob Silvers, the undersecretary for policy at DHS, and Vice Chair Heather Adkins, senior director of security engineering at Google, the new group, which draws its authority from an <a href="#">executive order</a> signed by President Biden last year, determined in its inaugural report that the widespread vulnerability did not compromise critical infrastructure nor result in any "high impact" incidents by nation state actors.</p>

To date, "exploitation of Log4j occurred at lower levels than many experts predicted, given the severity of the vulnerability," the report indicated. Still, the board's leaders warned the potential for breaches remains.

"I think our recommendation that people need to keep an eye on this emphasizes that this incident is not done and that we will continue to hear about new compromises going forward," Adkins said Wednesday during a briefing with reporters.

Silvers cautioned, however, that the board is limited in its understanding of current exploits because critical infrastructure owners and operators are not yet required to report cyber breaches to the federal government. In March, Congress passed legislation requiring such incidents to be reported to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), but the agency has up to two years to start rulemaking, setting the program's parameters.

"The board noted that because there is currently no cyber incident reporting requirement in effect federally across critical infrastructure, we have potentially limited visibility into exploitation," Silvers said.

Silvers vowed that CISA is working toward "rapid implementation" of the law to establish the new rules "as quickly as possible."

The board's 52-page report outlined a comprehensive timeline of events surrounding the discovery of the Log4j vulnerability, beginning in late-November 2021, when a researcher at the Chinese e-commerce firm Alibaba reported the flaw to its creators within the Apache Software Foundation (ASF).

"We believe the global community benefited from the security researcher at Alibaba, who followed coordinated vulnerability disclosure best practices by bringing the discovery of the vulnerability to the Apache Software Foundation, the open source foundation that maintains Log4j," Silvers told reporters Wednesday, applauding the cybersecurity expert who first brought the vulnerability to light.

Silvers also revealed that the Cyber Safety Review Board reached out to the Chinese ambassador to the United States in an effort to better understand the Chinese government's correspondence with Alibaba.

According to the report, the Chinese government informed the Board that Alibaba first reported the vulnerability to its Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) on December 13, 2021, 19 days after the problem was disclosed to ASF. According to Reuters, China has [penalized Alibaba](#) for failing to report the Log4j vulnerability sooner, but the Chinese government declined a request from the board to provide more information on the sanctions, according to its report.

Silvers said that China's "lack of transparency" only "heightens concern" among the board that "China's regulatory regime will discourage network defenders from [disclosing vulnerabilities] with software developers" in the future.

"Independent of a possible sanction against Alibaba, the Board noted troubling elements of MIIT's regulations governing disclosure of security vulnerabilities," the report added, suggesting that the Chinese government's requirement for providers to report vulnerabilities to them within two days of discovery "could give the PRC government early knowledge of vulnerabilities before vendor fixes are made available to the community."

"The Board is concerned this will afford the [Chinese] government a window in which to exploit vulnerabilities before network defenders can patch them. This is a disturbing prospect given the [Chinese] government's known track record of intellectual property theft, intelligence collection, surveillance of human rights activists and dissidents, and military cyber operations," the report continued.

The report also outlined a series of recommendations for enhanced cybersecurity going forward, including a push for a better "software ecosystem." As part of that initiative, the board recommended further investments in open-source software security and urged software developers to generate a "Software Bill of Materials," or "SBOM," that can be shipped with their product. This catalog of sorts would be designed

to let consumers know what sort of software lives inside their products and applications, somewhat akin to what a nutrition facts label does for food.

"Our observation is that organizations using open source software should be supporting that community directly – getting them access to training programs, developing the tool sets that will make things like SBOMs adoptable," Adkins told reporters.

The 15-member panel dealt with nearly 80 organizations and individuals representing software developers, end users, security professionals, and companies to produce Thursday's report. Participants included Alibaba, Amazon, Apple, AT&T and Google, in addition to a slew of private companies, cybersecurity firms and scores of government agencies around the globe.

The Cyber Safety Review Board was originally tasked with conducting a postmortem of the [massive SolarWinds breach](#) carried out by Russian hackers, but ultimately pivoted to studying the impact of the Log4j flaw.

DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas called the cyber threat environment "as diverse and critical as it's ever been," during Wednesday's briefing. "We are seeing nation state cyber actors and cybercriminals, including those involved in ransomware operations, routinely use cyber means to steal data, gain financially and hold critical infrastructure at risk," the secretary added.

CISA in February launched a "shields up" campaign to urge U.S. companies to safeguard against possible cyberattacks in the wake of [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#). That warning has lasted for 150 days so far.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Microsoft warns Mac users: install patches</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-tells-mac-users-to-install-patches-to-protect-against-macos-app-sandbox-flaw/">https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-tells-mac-users-to-install-patches-to-protect-against-macos-app-sandbox-flaw/</a>
GIST	<p>Microsoft has detailed an exploit for a flaw its researchers found in macOS that could allow specially crafted codes to escape the App Sandbox and run unrestricted on the system.</p> <p>If you have a Mac but haven't installed Apple's <a href="#">May 16 security updates for macOS</a>, you should now, according to the Microsoft 365 Defender Research Team.</p> <p>The App Sandbox flaw is tracked as <a href="#">CVE-2022-26706</a>.</p> <p>"We encourage macOS users to install these security updates as soon as possible. We also want to thank the Apple product security team for their responsiveness in fixing this issue," <a href="#">writes Jonathan Bar Or of the Microsoft 365 Defender Research Team</a>.</p> <p>A reason users should install this update is that Microsoft has now shared a proof of concept (POC) exploit in two formats. One POC is long and the other so concise he says it's a "Tweetable PoC".</p> <p>Apple tagged it as an <a href="#">issue with macOS Launch Services</a> that was fixed with "additional sandbox restrictions on third-party applications".</p> <p>As Microsoft explains, the App Sandbox is Apple's access control technology in macOS that application developers must adopt to distribute their apps through the Mac App Store. That includes Microsoft which distributes Office apps like Word and Excel in the store.</p> <p>App Sandbox is an access control technology provided in macOS, enforced at the kernel level according to <a href="#">Apple</a>. It aims to contain damage to the system and the user's data if an app becomes compromised by limiting access to sensitive resources on a per-app basis.</p>

	<p>Apple says App Sandbox is "not a silver bullet" but does act as a "last line of defense" against theft, corruption, or deletion of user data, and frustrates attempts to hijack system hardware if an attacker exploits a bug in an app.</p> <p>Microsoft's probe of macOS Launch Services as a means of escaping the sandbox built on previous research by others in 2021, 2020 and 2018 detailing similar vulnerabilities. Last year, researchers at Perception Point found a similar sandbox escape via Launch Services (CVE-2021-30864) . Apple <a href="#">patched it September and disclosed it in January</a>.</p> <p>Microsoft said it found the vulnerability while researching potential ways to run and detect malicious macros in Microsoft Office on macOS. "Our findings revealed that it was possible to escape the sandbox by leveraging macOS's Launch Services to run an <i>open -stdin</i> command on a specially crafted Python file with the said prefix. Our research shows that even the built-in, baseline security features in macOS could still be bypassed, potentially compromising system and user data."</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 China hackers target US political reporters</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/china-iran-north-korea-turkey-hackers-journalists-media-malware-phishing/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/china-iran-north-korea-turkey-hackers-journalists-media-malware-phishing/</a>
GIST	<p>Hackers connected with the Chinese government engaged in numerous phishing campaigns targeting U.S.-based journalists since early 2021, with operations focused on political and national security reporters and White House correspondents in the days leading up to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, researchers said Thursday.</p> <p>The previously unreported efforts are just a few examples of the digital risks that reporters and media companies are facing from an array of well-resourced state-backed hackers doing everything from gathering information to spreading malware.</p> <p>Researchers with cybersecurity firm <a href="#">Proofpoint shared the details Thursday</a> as part of a report looking at these kinds of operations carried out by China, Iran, North Korea and Turkey. The attacks both targeted journalists and had hackers posing as journalists to target others, the researchers said.</p> <p>Journalists and media organizations face the same cyberthreats as any other sector, the researchers noted. But given the nature of the work journalists do, they make especially juicy targets for government hackers.</p> <p>"The media sector and those that work within it can open doors that others cannot," the researchers wrote. "A well-timed, successful attack on a journalist's email account could provide insights into sensitive, budding stories and source identification."</p> <p>And posing as journalists allows hackers the ability to "spread disinformation or pro-state propaganda, provide disinformation during times of war or pandemic, or be used to influence a politically charged atmosphere," the researchers added.</p> <p>Attacks on journalists' professional email accounts is the most frequent way these kinds of operations take place, given that journalists are frequently communicating with unknown parties, the researchers said.</p> <p>Overall, the data presented in Thursday's report suggests that "some campaigns have targeted the media for a competitive intelligence edge while others have targeted journalists immediately following their coverage painting a regime in a poor light or as a means to spread disinformation or propaganda," the researchers wrote.</p> <p>Cyberattacks on journalists and media organizations are nothing new. In 2013, <a href="#">The New York Times reported</a> that Chinese hackers had been persistently attacking the paper over the course of several months in connection with reporting on then Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. In <a href="#">February of this year, The Wall Street Journal reported</a> that hackers likely associated with China hacked and accessed emails and other documents of journalists and other employees in an intelligence collection effort.</p>

And in November, the [Department of Justice alleged](#) that two Iranian hackers accessed the computer network of a media company with aims to modify content on news organizations' websites as part of a sprawling election interference operation.

### **China**

Chinese hackers associated with what are believed to be two distinct campaigns targeted U.S.-based journalists over the course of 2021 and into 2022, the researchers said. The first group, tracked by Proofpoint as TA412 but by [Microsoft as Zirconium](#), used malicious emails with web beacons to collect information from targets' systems spanning several months in early 2021.

The researchers identified five campaigns, "most notably those covering U.S. politics and national security during events that gained international attention." The researchers recorded "a very abrupt shift in targeting of reconnaissance phishing" in the days immediately preceding the January 6 attacks on the U.S. Capitol, the researchers said, with "a focus on Washington DC and White House correspondents during this time."

Emails sent to targets used subject lines pulled from recent articles, while the body of the email duplicated the text from those articles. Also included in the body was a PNG image file that connected to a hacker-controlled domain, a campaign identifier, victim identifier, campaign date and information about the image file.

In August, after months-long break, the same group resumed attacks, but broadened the target pool to include "those working on cybersecurity, surveillance, and privacy issues with a focus on China." There was another pause, and then the attacks resumed in February 2022, the researchers said.

A separate Chinese group, tracked by Proofpoint as TA459, targeted victims with a malicious document that, if opened, installed and executed Chinoxy malware. The malware gives an attacker a backdoor to a victim's computer and allows them to maintain persistence, the researchers said.

### **North Korea**

A North Korean campaign tracked by Proofpoint as TA404, known by others as [Lazarus](#), "in early 2022 targeted a U.S.-based media organization with job opportunity-themed phishing," the researchers said, after the unnamed organization published a story critical of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The Proofpoint researchers note that they did not see the follow-up emails associated with this campaign, but noted that [Google's Threat Analysis Group published findings in March](#) on a similar North Korean operation that shared the same indicators of compromise.

### **Turkey**

A group Proofpoint tracks as TA482 and associates with the Turkish government has been "regularly engaging in credential harvesting campaigns" aimed at taking control of social media accounts associated with mostly U.S.-based journalists and media organizations, the researchers said.

Twitter credentials for journalists "from well-known news outlets to those writing for an academic institution" were targeted as recently as June, the researchers said, with phony Twitter security login pages.

### **Iran**

An Iranian group the researchers call TA453, also known as [Charming Kitten](#), "routinely masquerades as journalists from around the world," the researchers noted. The hackers use the personas to engage targets in benign conversation before deploying credential harvesting malware.

A separate Iranian group, TA456 or Tortoiseshell, also acts as media organizations and routinely send newsletters purporting to be news from across the political spectrum, including Fox News and The

	<p>Guardian. The activity likely complements previous campaigns targeting defense contractors, the researchers said, which <a href="#">Proofpoint reported in July 2021</a>.</p> <p>And a third Iranian group, tracked by Proofpoint as TA457, masquerades as “iNews Reporter to deliver malware to public relations personnel for companies in the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia, the researchers said. A March 2022 effort sent an email with the subject “Iran Cyber War,” while others have included Iran, Russia, drones, war crimes, “secret weapons” and more.</p> <p>Proofpoint identified campaigns from this group every two to three weeks between September 2021 and March 2022, the researchers said.</p> <p>“The varied approaches by APT actors — using web beacons for reconnaissance, credential harvesting, and sending malware to gain a foothold in a recipient’s network — means those operating in the media space need to stay vigilant,” the researchers concluded.</p> <p>Journalists and media organizations reporting on China or North Korea “may become part of their collection requirements in the future,” they said.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Pakistan hackers target India students</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/pakistani-hackers-targeting-indian.html">https://thehackernews.com/2022/07/pakistani-hackers-targeting-indian.html</a>
GIST	<p>The advanced persistent threat (APT) group known as Transparent Tribe has been attributed to a new ongoing phishing campaign targeting students at various educational institutions in India at least since December 2021.</p> <p>"This new campaign also suggests that the APT is actively expanding its network of victims to include civilian users," Cisco Talos <a href="#">said</a> in a report shared with The Hacker News.</p> <p>Also tracked under the monikers APT36, Operation C-Major, PROJECTM, Mythic Leopard, the Transparent Tribe actor is <a href="#">suspected</a> to be of Pakistani origin and is known to strike government entities and think tanks in India and Afghanistan with custom malware such as CrimsonRAT, ObliqueRAT, and CapraRAT.</p> <p>But the targeting of educational institutions and students, first <a href="#">observed</a> by India-based K7 Labs in May 2022, indicates a deviation from the adversary's typical focus.</p> <p>"The latest targeting of the educational sector may align with the strategic goals of espionage of the nation-state," Cisco Talos researchers told The Hacker News. "APTs will frequently target individuals at universities and technical research organizations in order to establish long term access to siphon off data related to ongoing research projects."</p> <p>Attack chains documented by the cybersecurity firm involve delivering a maldoc to the targets either as an attachment or a link to a remote location via a spear-phishing email, ultimately leading to the deployment of CrimsonRAT.</p> <p>"This APT puts in a substantial effort towards social engineering their victims into infecting themselves," the researchers said. "Transparent Tribes' email lures try to appear as legitimate as possible with pertinent content to convince the targets into opening the maldocs or visiting the malicious links provided."</p> <p><a href="#">CrimsonRAT</a>, also known as SEEDOOR and Scarimson, <a href="#">functions</a> as the staple implant of choice for the threat actor to establish long-term access into victim networks as well as exfiltrate data of interest to a remote server.</p>



	<p>Courtesy of its modular architecture, the malware allows the attackers to remotely control the infected machine, steal browser credentials, record keystrokes, capture screenshots, and execute arbitrary commands.</p> <p>What's more, a number of these decoy documents are said to be hosted on education-themed domains (e.g., "studentsportal[.]co") that were registered as early as June 2021, with the infrastructure operated by a Pakistani web hosting services provider named Zain Hosting.</p> <p>"The entire scope of Zain Hosting's role in the Transparent Tribe organization is still unknown," the researchers noted. "This is likely one of many third-parties Transparent Tribe employs to prepare, stage and/or deploy components of their operation."</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Ransomware activity surges</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-activity-resurges-q2/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ransomware-activity-resurges-q2/</a>
GIST	<p>Ransomware activity rose by a fifth in the last quarter, according to a <a href="#">report</a> from security firm Digital Shadows.</p> <p>The company, which monitors almost 90 data leak sites on the dark web, observed ransomware groups name 705 victims in Q2 2022, representing a 21% increase over last quarter's 582. This was a resurgence in activity following a 25.3% decline quarter-on-quarter during Q1.</p> <p>The LockBit ransomware group overtook Conti in victim numbers as Conti ceased operations following the <a href="#">leak of internal chat logs</a>. Conti had reached almost 900 victims during its operations, but LockBit is now closing in on 1000 after a 13% growth in activity during the quarter.</p> <p>LockBit also continued to innovate, releasing version 3 of its ransomware with new features, including support for payments using the Zcash cryptocurrency. It also launched a reward program for any information on high-value targets, along with a data leak site that allows anyone to purchase victim data.</p> <p>At around 230, Lockbit's quarterly victim numbers far exceeded any other group in Q2. It was accountable for almost a third of all postings to leak sites in Q2. Conti, which had limped along for several weeks after its own data leak, managed just over 50. In third place was Alphv, which grew 118% during the quarter. Basta came in fourth.</p> <p>Some other smaller groups are also growing rapidly, according to the report. Vice Society, in fifth place this quarter, doubled its activity.</p> <p>Industrial goods and services was by far the hardest hit sector in Q2, accounting for almost a fifth of all attacks at 18.4%. Technology came second, at 8.7%, followed by construction (7.9%), healthcare (6.4%), and government (5.5%).</p> <p>The US was the most targeted region, accounting for almost 40% of all incidents. Germany and the UK followed in second and third place.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 New Android malware on Google Play</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-android-malware-on-google-play-installed-3-million-times/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-android-malware-on-google-play-installed-3-million-times/</a>
GIST	A new Android malware family on the Google Play Store that secretly subscribes users to premium services was downloaded over 3,000,000 times.

The malware, named 'Autolykos,' was discovered by Evina's security researcher [Maxime Ingrao](#) to be in at least eight Android applications, two of which are still available on the Google Play Store at the time of this writing.

The two apps still available are named 'Funny Camera' by KellyTech, which has over 500,000 installations, and 'Razer Keyboard & Theme' by rxcheldiolola, which counts over 50,000 installs on the Play Store.

The remaining six applications have been removed from the Google Play Store, but those who still have them installed risk being charged with costly subscriptions by the malware's activities.

- Vlog Star Video Editor (com.vlog.star.video.editor) – 1 million downloads
- Creative 3D Launcher (app.launcher.creative3d) – 1 million downloads
- Wow Beauty Camera (com.wowbeauty.camera) – 100,000 downloads
- Gif Emoji Keyboard (com.gif.emoji.keyboard) – 100,000 downloads
- Freeglow Camera 1.0.0 (com.glow.camera.open) – 5,000 downloads
- Coco Camera v1.1 (com.toomore.cool.camera) – 1,000 downloads

During a discussion with Ingrao, the researcher told BleepingComputer that he discovered the apps in June 2021 and reported his findings to Google at the time.

Although Google acknowledged receiving the report, it took the company six months to remove the set of six, while two malicious apps remain on the Play Store to this day.

After so much time had passed since the initial reporting, the researcher disclosed his findings publicly.

#### **Autolykos functions and promotion**

Autolykos is a malware that performs stealthy malicious behavior like executing URLs on a remote browser and then including the result in HTTP requests instead of using Webview.

This behavior is meant to make its actions less noticeable and thus not be detected by users of compromised devices.

In many cases, the malicious applications requested permission to read SMS content upon installation on the device, allowing the apps to access a victim's SMS text messages.

To promote the apps to new users, the Autolykos operators created numerous advertising campaigns on social media. For the Razer Keyboard & Theme alone, Ingrao counted 74 ad campaigns on Facebook.

Also, while some malicious applications suffered from inevitable negative reviews on the Play Store, those with fewer downloads maintain a good user rating due to bot reviews.

To stay safe against these threats, Android users should monitor background internet data and battery consumption, keep Play Protect active, and try to minimize the number of apps they install on their smartphones.

**Update 7/13/2022:** Google has removed the two remaining adware applications from the Play Store shortly after the publication of this post.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Lilith ransomware emerges w/extortion site
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-lilith-ransomware-emerges-with-extortion-site-lists-first-victim/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-lilith-ransomware-emerges-with-extortion-site-lists-first-victim/</a>
GIST	A new ransomware operation has been launched under the name 'Lilith,' and it has already posted its first victim on a data leak site created to support double-extortion attacks.

Lilith is a C/C++ console-based ransomware discovered by [JAMESWT](#) and designed for 64-bit versions of Windows. Like most ransomware operations launching today, Lilith performs double-extortions attacks, which is when the threat actors steal data before encrypting devices.

According to a report by researchers at [Cyble](#) who analyzed Lilith, the new family doesn't introduce any novelties. However, it's one of the latest threats to watch out for, along with [RedAlert](#) and [Omega](#) that also recently emerged.

### **A look at Lilith**

Upon execution, Lilith attempts to terminate processes that match entries on a hardcoded list, including Outlook, SQL, Thunderbird, Steam, PowerPoint, WordPad, Firefox, and more.

This frees up valuable files from applications that may be using them at the moment, thus making them available for encryption.

Before the encryption process is initiated, Lilith creates and drops ransom notes on all the enumerated folders. The note gives the victims three days to contact the ransomware actors on the provided Tox chat address, or they are threatened with public data exposure.

The file types excluded from encryption are EXE, DLL, and SYS, while Program Files, web browsers, and the Recycle Bin folders are also bypassed.

Interestingly, Lilith also contains an exclusion for '*ecdh\_pub\_k.bin*,' which stores the local public key of BABUK ransomware infections.

### **Exclusion list including BABUK's key (Cyble)**

This might be a remnant from copied code, so it could be an indication of a link between the two ransomware strains. Finally, the encryption takes place using Windows cryptographic API, while the Windows' CryptGenRandom function generates the random key.

### **What to expect**

While it's too early to tell if Lilith could develop into a large-scale threat or a successful RaaS program, it's something analysts should keep an eye on.

Its first victim, which has been removed from the extortion site at the time of writing this, was a large construction group based in South America.

This is a sign that Lilith might be interested in big-game hunting and that its operators are already aware of the political labyrinths they need to navigate to avoid being targeted by law enforcement.

After all, most of these novel ransomware projects are rebrands of older programs, so their operators typically know the intricacies of the field very well.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Retbleed speculative execution CPU attack
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-retbleed-speculative-execution-cpu-attack-bypasses-retpoline-fixes/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-retbleed-speculative-execution-cpu-attack-bypasses-retpoline-fixes/</a>
GIST	<p>Security researchers have discovered a new speculative execution attack called Retbleed that affects processors from both Intel and AMD and could be used to extract sensitive information.</p> <p>Retbleed focuses on return instructions, which are part of the retpoline software mitigation against the speculative execution class of attacks that became known starting early 2018, with <a href="#">Spectre</a>.</p> <p>The issue impacts Intel Core CPUs from generation 6 (Skylake - 2015) through 8 (Coffee Lake - 2017) and AMD Zen 1, Zen 1+, Zen 2 released between 2017 and 2019.</p>

## Leveraging return instructions

Speculative execution is an optimization technique that allows CPUs to perform computations before knowing if they are required by future tasks.

When the destination address is known, a direct branch contained in the instruction is followed. An indirect branch occurs when there is no clue about the destination but it is predicted from already executed branches.

[Spectre](#) attacks take advantage of these guesses, tricking the processor into running instructions that require sensitive data from the memory.

[Retpoline](#) was released a software-based solution to mitigate speculative execution attacks by using return operations to isolate indirect branches.

However, researchers at ETH Zurich university found a way to force the prediction of the return operations just like in the case of indirect branches, and to inject branch targets in the kernel address-space, regardless of the user's privileges.

*We found that we can trigger the microarchitectural conditions, on both AMD and Intel CPUs, that forces returns to be predicted like indirect branches. We also built the necessary tools to discover locations in the Linux kernel where these conditions are met.*

*We found that we can inject branch targets that reside inside the kernel address-space, even as an unprivileged user. Even though we cannot access branch targets inside the kernel address-space — branching to such a target results in a page fault — the Branch Prediction Unit will update itself upon observing a branch and assume that it was legally executed, even if it's to a kernel address.*

The researchers further explain in a [technical paper on Retbleed](#) that using a precise branch history on Intel CPUs, it is possible to hijack all return instructions that “follow sufficiently-deep call stacks.”

In the case of AMD processors, it is possible to hijack any return instructions if the previous branch destination was chosen correctly during branch poisoning.

## PoC in action

For Intel processors, the vulnerability is tracked as CVE-2022-29901. Intel has released a [security advisory](#) recommending the use of Indirect Branch Restricted Speculation (IBRS) instead of retpoline. IBRS is available by default on Windows systems, so no update is required. Intel worked with the Linux community to create updates that address the Retbleed issue.

For AMD CPUs, Retbleed is tracked as CVE-2022-29900. The company released [guidance](#) to mitigate the issue that could lead to the disclosure of sensitive information.

Although ETH Zurich researchers developed a [Retbleed proof of concept](#) (PoC) only for Linux, the vulnerability affects other operating systems, too, because it is hardware related.

The [technical paper on Retbleed](#) has been published and the researchers will present the vulnerability on August 10 at the [Usenix Security conference](#).

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 CoinPayments to shut down in US
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/technology/coinpayments-to-shut-down-in-us-5-days-left-to-withdraw-funds/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/technology/coinpayments-to-shut-down-in-us-5-days-left-to-withdraw-funds/</a>
GIST	Global crypto payments gateway, CoinPayments.net is ceasing operations in the United States soon and has advised users to withdraw their assets before July 19th, 2022.

The short notice given by the exchange via a private email left some customers suspecting if this was an "exit scam" or caused by another mysterious incident.

### **Crypto platform shut down: 5 days left to take out funds**

CoinPayments.net, a worldwide payment gateway supporting over 120 types of crypto coins began emailing customers sometime last week announcing its shut down across the U.S.

The company advises users to withdraw their virtual assets to an external wallet no later than July 19th.

"With effect from July 19, 2022, accounts belonging to U.S. users will no longer be accessible," reads the announcement:

The crypto operation has blamed recent Anti-Money Laundering (AML) regulations and market changes for the sudden closure of their business operations across the U.S.

"Unfortunately, due to recent AML regulations and changes, we are no longer able to provide services to the United States," a CoinPayments spokesperson told BleepingComputer.

"Hence the [U.S.-based accounts have] been flagged and will be closed on the date that is mentioned in the email that they have recently received."

U.S. is also not the only country barred by the platform. Rather the U.S. has now joined the [company's existing list of some 34 nations](#) (including countries sanctioned by the [U.S. Treasury's OFAC](#)) where CoinPayments and its parent company UAB Star Ventures do not trade.

### **Short notice prompts 'exit scam' concerns among customers**

The discreet delivery of the closure announcement via email and the rather short notice given to customers for withdrawing their digital assets left many concerned, with a few suspecting if this was a crypto grab or an exit scam.

An exit scam refers to an unscrupulous practice by a legitimate or criminal business operation pretending to have lost access to any funds or goods due to being hacked, seized by the government, or slapped with new regulations or other problems. They then tell their clients that they have no way of reimbursing them or providing their paid-for services, while quietly sneaking away with the stolen money or goods.

BleepingComputer has previously repeatedly reported on exit scams including those pulled by [crypto platform ARBIX](#), [dark web market Empire](#), and the operators of [Jokeroo ransomware](#) that caught users by surprise.

CoinPayments, on the other hand, has given at least some time advance notice to customers and urged them to withdraw their assets, making this seem unlikely to be an exit scam at this time.

Unfortunately, though, the company's public response to every tweet from an anxious customer has been generic and directs them [to submit a \(private\) support ticket](#). Some [called the company out](#) for not addressing "on social media that they are closing [people's] accounts" and taking a private notification approach to the matter.

It remains yet to be seen how the development unfolds over the next few days but the clock is ticking and CoinPayments customers should cash out their digital assets as soon as possible.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Game publishing giant confirms hack, theft
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/bandai-namco-confirms-hack-after-alphv-ransomware-data-leak-threat/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/bandai-namco-confirms-hack-after-alphv-ransomware-data-leak-threat/</a>
GIST	<p>Game publishing giant Bandai Namco has confirmed that they suffered a cyberattack that may have resulted in the theft of customers' personal data.</p> <p>Bandai Namco is a Japanese publisher of numerous popular video games, including Elden Ring, Dark Souls, Pac-Man, Tekken, Gundam, Soulcalibur, and many more.</p> <p>This past Monday, the BlackCat ransomware operation (aka AlphV) claimed to have breached Bandai Namco and stolen corporate data during the attack.</p> <p>Today, Bandai Namco confirmed that they suffered a cyberattack on July 3rd when hackers breached internal systems for offices in Asian regions, other than Japan.</p> <p>The full statement issued today by Bandai Namco can be read below.  <i>"On July 3, 2022, Bandai Namco Holdings Inc. confirmed that it experienced an unauthorized access by third party to the internal systems of several Group companies in Asian regions (excluding Japan). After we confirmed the unauthorized access, we have taken measures such as blocking access to the servers to prevent the damage from spreading. In addition, there is a possibility that customer information related to the Toys and Hobby Business in Asian regions (excluding Japan) was included in the servers and PCs, and we are currently identifying the status about existence of leakage, scope of the damage, and investigating the cause.</i></p> <p><i>We will continue to investigate the cause of this incident and will disclose the investigation results as appropriate. We will also work with external organizations to strengthen security throughout the Group and take measures to prevent recurrence.</i></p> <p><i>We offer our sincerest apologies to everyone involved for any complications or concerns caused by this incident."</i> - Bandai Namco.</p> <p>While Bandai Namco has not provided any technical details regarding the cyberattack, the entry to BlackCat's data leak site and the company confirming the attack makes it more than likely that they suffered a ransomware attack.</p> <p>BlackCat has not released any of Bandai Namco's allegedly stolen data at this time.</p> <p>However, ransomware gangs typically hold off on releasing stolen data until they are sure that a company will not pay a ransom.</p> <p>Now that Bandai Namco has issued a public statement, it would not be surprising to find that the company's data will be leaked later today or tomorrow.</p> <p><b>Who is AlphV/BackCat?</b>  The AlphV/BlackCat ransomware operation launched <a href="#">in November 2021</a> and is believed to be a rebrand of the DarkSide/BlackMatter gang.</p> <p>The ransomware gang gained notoriety as DarkSide after <a href="#">attacking the Colonial Pipeline</a> and feeling the <a href="#">full pressure of international law enforcement</a>.</p> <p>Today, the group is considered one of the largest ransomware threats targeting the enterprise, hitting companies such as the <a href="#">Moncler</a> fashion group and the <a href="#">Swissport</a> airline cargo handling services provider.</p> <p>The gang has also been evolving its extortion tactics by launching a <a href="#">new searchable database of stolen data</a> this week, making double-extortion attacks even more damaging for victims.</p>



	In April, the FBI <a href="#">published a warning</a> that BlackCat had breached at least <a href="#">60 entities worldwide</a> and stated that they have "extensive networks and experience with ransomware operations."
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Vishing scam targets small businesses</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/application-security/quickbooks-vishing-scam-targets-small-businesses">https://www.darkreading.com/application-security/quickbooks-vishing-scam-targets-small-businesses</a>
GIST	<p>Cybercriminals are posing as Intuit's popular accounting software package QuickBooks to target Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 small business users in a voice-phishing scam.</p> <p>The campaign sends a false invoice via email containing a claim that a credit card has already been charged for an order. In order to dispute the charge, victims are directed to call the number included in the email, according to researchers with INKY. The scam was first uncovered in December 2021 and the frequency of attack has accelerated sharply, they said.</p> <p>The threat actors have been leveraging QuickBooks' free 30-day trial offer to set up fake accounts from which to send fraudulent invoices, impersonating major IT companies including Amazon, Apple, PayPal, and McAfee. Once the victim calls, they are asked for bank account information, login credentials, or other personally identifiable information.</p> <p>"These attacks were highly effective at evading detection because they were identical to non-fraudulent Quickbooks notifications, even when examining the emails' raw HTML files closely," the report noted. "All notifications originated from authentic Intuit IP addresses, passed email authentication (SPF and DKIM) tests for intuit[.]com, and only contained high-reputation intuit[.]com URLs."</p> <p>One such scam in April impersonated an Amazon Prime shipping notification, which used the strings "amazn" and "amzn" to evade detection filters. By clicking on the "print or save" or "view invoice" buttons, the victim is then taken to Intuit's website and shown a fraudulent invoice, inducing the user to call the number and give up financial information.</p> <p>"The natural response is to get right on the phone and try to back the order out, or, barring that, find a way to obtain a refund," the INKY report noted. "The phishers take advantage of this disrupted emotional state to extract personal or financial information before the victim realizes that something is off."</p> <p><b>Defense Requires Vigilance</b></p> <p>INKY recommends that recipients of these kinds of messages should refrain from calling any phone numbers they provide and be wary of requests for payment through the form of gift cards, a method unlikely to be used by businesses.</p> <p>"If there is any doubt about a charge, it is best to contact the relevant credit card company to see if there really is a charge in that amount," the report noted. "Any real charge would be shown as 'pending'."</p> <p>Small businesses are increasingly targets for cyberattacks, according to <a href="#">recent research</a>; however, just <a href="#">40% of small businesses</a> have a cybersecurity policy. Among the key steps small businesses can take to improve their security posture is adopting strong security policies and training employees in best practices, along with <a href="#">tactical investments in cybersecurity software</a>.</p> <p><b>Plenty of Phishing in the Sea</b></p> <p>Meanwhile, cybercriminals are deploying new vishing methods to defraud victims, according to a <a href="#">report</a> from Kaspersky, including attacks carried out through popular social media sites or major IT service providers like PayPal. A recent vishing scam cited by Kaspersky was based on a widespread TikTok prank where friends use an automated answering-machine voice to warn them that a lot of money will soon be taken out of their bank account.</p>

	<p>"When people are convinced to disclose their personal data during a phone call rather than on a phishing page, they often don't have the chance to consider that they are the target of a hoax — and the large number of TikTok videos with this prank is a prominent example of this," according to Kaspersky.</p> <p>The security firm reports that the volume of vishing is on the rise, with 350,000 vishing emails between March and June 2022, with nearly 100,000 of these emails spotted in June alone.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Judge freezes assets of crypto hedge fund</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/13/judge-freezes-assets-crypto-hedge-fund-three-arrows-capital/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/07/13/judge-freezes-assets-crypto-hedge-fund-three-arrows-capital/</a>
GIST	<p>A federal bankruptcy court has frozen the assets of Three Arrows Capital, the once-prominent crypto hedge fund that managed as much as \$10 billion in assets until it fell into liquidation last month.</p> <p>In an emergency hearing Tuesday, Judge Martin Glenn of the Southern District of New York granted a motion allowing liquidators to “transfer, encumber, or otherwise dispose” of any Three Arrows Capital assets located in the United States. In addition, the court authorized subpoenas for the founders, whose whereabouts are unknown.</p> <p>The Singapore-based company, also known as 3AC, was founded a decade ago by Su Zhu and Kyle Davies, who both studied at Columbia University in New York City and worked for the same investment bank before making their names as crypto influencers and managers of a multibillion-dollar fund. It did not, however, survive the broader crypto market meltdown that has erased hundreds of billions in value this year. Bitcoin, the most valuable digital currency, is trading below \$20,000, having shed more than 70 percent of its value since last fall.</p> <p>On June 27, crypto broker Voyager Digital said that Three Arrows Capital had not made payments on a loan worth more than \$665 million. The same day, a court in the British Virgin Islands ordered the fund into liquidation. Four days later, 3AC filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 15 of the U.S. bankruptcy code, which allows a foreign debtor to deal with their U.S. assets.</p> <p>The court-appointed liquidators — Russell Crumpler and Christopher Farmer of the global advisory firm Teneo — cited a “lack of cooperation to date” by Zhu and Davies in a July 8 filing, whose whereabouts they say are unknown. Though the fund’s lawyer, Christopher Anand Daniel of Singapore-based Advocatus Law, has been in contact, liquidators say, the co-founders have not begun to cooperate “in any meaningful manner.”</p> <p>Shortly before the judge granted the emergency motion, Zhu tweeted two screenshots of email communications between Daniel and the liquidators, including one in which the 3AC lawyer called the July 8 filing “baiting.”</p> <p>“It has come to our clients’ attention that you have made an application in the United States of America,” Daniel wrote to Crumpler, “it appears, therefore, that contrary to your representations that you were seeking to engage our clients in good faith, and constructively, you had already prepared to make that application, and were in fact baiting our clients.</p> <p>“Our clients, and their families have received threats of physical violence, and have had to field queries from the Monetary Authority of Singapore in the last week, or so, which has meant that they have been working under a lot of time pressure,” Daniel added.</p> <p>But in Tuesday’s hearing, Teneo’s attorney Adam Goldberg said that the information provided was “by no means a sufficient form of cooperation,” CNBC reported.</p> <p>The broader digital currency market has been getting battered for months. In May, Terra’s popular stablecoin terraUSD and its sister token luna collapsed, causing investors to lose nearly \$60 billion.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>That helped bring down Three Arrows Capital, where Zhu and Davies had heavily promoted luna, and made the crypto lender suspend withdrawals. Terra’s founder, Do Kwon, was among the defendants named in a class-action lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court of North Carolina.</p> <p>Last week, crypto lender Vault announced it had suspended all withdrawals, trading and deposits for its 800,000 members after the steep fall in crypto values. The next day, London-based rival Nexo agreed to buy as much as 100 percent of the company. The crypto bank Celsius also was forced to freeze withdrawals in June.</p> <p>Experts say the extreme volatility is sure to amplify calls for more oversight.</p> <p>“Regulation is coming, and it’s coming soon,” said Kene Ezeji-Okoye, president of U.K.-based digital currency company Millicent. “Many in the industry will oppose this idea, but equally many are embracing calls for smart regulation, understanding that it’s the only way for the industry to truly reach mainstream adoption. However, regulators must be careful not to stifle genuine innovation.”</p> <p>Ben Caselin, head of strategy and research at digital currency exchange AAX, said a path is opening to make the cryptocurrency market more sustainable.</p> <p>“If anything, these liquidation events should pave the way to turn towards a more sustainable market structuring more strongly tethered to those core principles which inspired the creation of bitcoin but which for too long, during this bull market, have been marketed if not evangelized but not actually delivered by too many projects.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>07/14 Ukraine: Russia disinformation remains</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/07/14/ukraine-takedown-requests-russia-propaganda/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/07/14/ukraine-takedown-requests-russia-propaganda/</a>
GIST	<p>In the frantic first weeks of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. tech companies that control the world’s largest information hubs sprang into action. Responding to pressure from Western governments, social media apps like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube <a href="#">banned or throttled</a> Russian state media accounts, beefed up their <a href="#">fact-checking operations</a>, <a href="#">curtailed ad sales in Russia</a> and opened direct lines to Ukrainian officials, inviting them to flag Russian disinformation and propaganda to be taken down.</p> <p>As the war grinds toward its sixth month, however, Russian propaganda techniques have evolved — and the tech firms haven’t kept up.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials who have flagged thousands of tweets, YouTube videos and other social media posts as Russian propaganda or anti-Ukrainian hate speech say the companies have grown less responsive to their requests to remove such content. <a href="#">New research shared with The Washington Post</a> by a Europe-based nonprofit initiative confirms that many of those requests seem to be going unheeded, with accounts parroting Kremlin talking points, spewing anti-Ukrainian slurs or even impersonating Ukrainian officials remaining active on major social networks.</p> <p>As a result, researchers say, Kremlin-backed narratives are once again propagating across Europe, threatening to undermine popular support for Ukraine in countries that it views as critical to its defense.</p> <p>“When it was the first months of full-scale Russian aggression, [the U.S. tech companies] were very proactive, very interested to help,” said Mykola Balaban, deputy head of Ukraine’s Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, a government agency. “Now they are avoiding to make a call with us.”</p> <p>While some platforms, including Meta’s Facebook and Microsoft’s LinkedIn, have continued to correspond regularly with Balaban’s agency, he said Google-owned YouTube hasn’t returned its emails for almost two months.</p>

Frustrated with the radio silence, Ukraine partnered in late April with independent researchers at the Disinformation Situation Center, a Europe-based coalition spanning multiple nonprofit organizations, to analyze the effectiveness of the platforms' moderation efforts. The findings, provided to The Post ahead of their publication Thursday, appear to bear out at least some of Balaban's concerns.

As Russian efforts shift from state media megaphones to individual influencers and "troll armies" coordinated via the messaging app Telegram, Ukrainian authorities and their nonprofit partners have been tracking and flagging posts that use derogatory or dehumanizing terms for Ukrainians as a way of justifying the war.

The report finds that upward of 70 percent of posts flagged as anti-Ukrainian hate speech on YouTube and Twitter remained available as of late June, while more than 90 percent of the accounts responsible for such posts remained active. Posts included slurs that blend the Russian words for "Ukrainian" and "baboon"; a tweet that translates to "Death to Bandera supporters, take no prisoners!," a reference to the late Ukrainian nationalist leader Stepan Bandera intended to link Ukraine to Nazi Germany; and a YouTube comment in Russian that translates to, "Ukraine will be wiped off the face of the Earth, hurray!"

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter all have policies against glorifying Russia's invasion or attacking Ukrainians based on their nationality, though they noted that it usually takes more than a single violation for the offending account to be suspended. Both YouTube and Twitter said they took action on some accounts after The Post brought them to the companies' attention on Wednesday.

YouTube spokeswoman Ivy Choi did not directly address the company's responsiveness to Ukraine's takedown requests, but she said the company has "stayed in regular contact with the Ukrainian government" and has removed more than 70,000 videos and 9,000 channels for violating its policies since the war began.

Twitter spokeswoman Elizabeth Busby also didn't directly address Ukrainian officials' concerns, but said the company continues to work with outside organizations and monitors for policy violations. Busby added that Twitter's policies go beyond a "leave up" vs. "take down" binary, including efforts to elevate credible information about the war and avoid recommending state media accounts or posts that may be misleading.

The report also finds that LinkedIn, a site better known for professional networking than politics, removed fewer than half of the posts that Ukrainian officials flagged as examples of Russian propaganda justifying the war. LinkedIn did not respond to a request for comment.

On the positive side, the researchers found that Facebook had removed all 98 of the posts the Ukrainian government and its partners flagged as containing anti-Ukrainian hate speech, though many of the accounts responsible remained active. (Facebook spokeswoman Erin McPike noted that the company's policies generally don't include a ban for first-time offenders, but do include escalating consequences for repeat offenders.) Facebook and its sister platform Instagram also appeared to be generally responsive to requests to take down accounts impersonating Ukrainian officials and advertisements spreading Kremlin talking points, though the researchers said they would prefer to see the platforms take a more proactive approach.

Of the more than 15,000 flagged posts in the study, the majority were tweets, perhaps because Twitter makes it easier for users to create multiple accounts, allows anonymity and has looser speech restrictions than its rivals. More than 1,000 of the posts and comments were from YouTube, while the numbers flagged on Facebook and Instagram were in the hundreds and on LinkedIn less than 100.

"I don't think it's bad will on the part of the tech companies," said Felix Kartte, senior adviser for the global nonprofit advocacy group Reset Tech, which focuses on accountability for social media platforms, and a co-author of the report. "It's really just lack of resources, lack of investment, lack of preparedness," and a shortage of staff with Russian and Ukrainian language skills and local expertise.

The criticism isn't novel. While the largest U.S. social media platforms have expanded their efforts to police their platforms globally in recent years, researchers and whistleblowers have consistently pointed out that they [devote fewer resources and have less expertise](#) in non-English-speaking regions. Companies including Facebook and Google have also been criticized since long before the latest Russian invasion for paying too little heed to Kremlin-backed disinformation campaigns in Ukraine, including [operations as early as 2014](#) that foreshadowed Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

But when Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in late February, Ukraine suddenly had the world's attention, including that of the tech companies. Under pressure from governments, the public and in some cases their own employees, tech firms [rewrote their rule books](#) to tackle Russian propaganda and protect Ukrainians online. Most notably, they blocked and downranked Russia's state media outlets, such as Russia Today, which had amassed huge global followings on various online platforms.

The moves earned the politically embattled tech giants good press, but they also seemed to be making a difference. A March 16 analysis by The Post found that social media interactions with major Russian propaganda outlets spiked as the invasion began, then [plummeted as the platforms took action](#).

Researchers and Ukrainian officials who spoke to The Post for this story agreed that has dented the Kremlin's capacity to spread false narratives about the war. In retribution, the Russian government blocked Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter within its borders, though YouTube remains available.

But the tech giants' attention has flagged over time, Ukrainian officials and researchers say, as headlines and public outrage in the United States and Western Europe have shifted from Russian aggression to domestic issues such as inflation, gas prices and, in Europe, the influx of Ukrainian refugees.

The Kremlin has taken note. With big state media accounts suspended or muffled, researchers say Russian leaders and influencers have shifted to the semiprivate messaging app Telegram to direct information campaigns via swarms of smaller accounts.

For instance, Balaban said he has seen signs of Russian influence in a spate of recent posts that seek to mislead Ukrainians about the safety of fleeing the country or sow division around the country's military draft.

"This psychological game is very similar in methodology to 2014 or 2016," Balaban said. "To find some problems in society, some cracks in society to exploit and create on that basis a conflict."

Thierry Breton, the commissioner for the internal market of the European Union, who has targeted tech for regulation, said the report from the Disinformation Situation Center exemplifies the need for tough regulations to hold tech platforms accountable.

"The Russian disinformation war is a real invasion of our digital space," Breton said in a statement to The Post. "The examples in the report show once again that big online platforms have taken insufficient measures to protect their users against this invasion. This has real life consequences across the whole world."

Ukrainians aren't the only audience for Russian propaganda, said Pia Lamberty, co-CEO of CeMAS, a German think tank that tracks online conspiracy theories and extremism. Pro-Russian influencers are also spreading disinformation and war denialism in Western Europe, aimed at undermining public support for costly measures such as sanctions on Russian oil or military support for Ukraine.

In Germany, they're tapping into a small but growing segment of the population that has embraced right-wing politics and conspiracy theories about everything from the war in Ukraine to coronavirus vaccines, Lamberty said.

	<p>“Disinformation is not only successful if people believe what you say, but when they get undecided. Somebody who’s undecided, whether Ukraine is the victim of Russian aggression, or whether Russia had maybe a reason because [the Ukrainians] are maybe fascist, will be less supportive of Ukraine,” she said.</p> <p>While tech firms responding to takedown requests is important, Lamberty added, what’s needed most is a more proactive, systematic approach to monitoring Russian propaganda networks across platforms. “As soon as you need a fact check, you’re already too late,” she said.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Constant scams impact to mental health</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/07/13/scam-fraud-fatigue/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/07/13/scam-fraud-fatigue/</a>
GIST	<p>Pamela McCarroll doesn’t have the luxury of ignoring phone calls from unknown numbers.</p> <p>The 30-year old is undergoing treatment for long-term colon cancer in Fairfax County, Va., and never knows whether it could be a doctor, a hospital with test results, or someone trying to schedule an appointment.</p> <p>Unfortunately, that means she’s fielding up to 20 spam phone calls every day on her mobile phone, adding to her already sky-high levels of stress. Since her diagnosis in August 2019, the number of scam attempts has shot up while the topics have gotten strangely specific, including Medicare or senior benefits.</p> <p>“I’ve gotten some calls about funeral insurance. That kind of bums me out,” McCarroll says. “I’ve got cancer, but you don’t have to rub it in.”</p> <p>We’re living in an era of constant scams. The technology and techniques behind them have improved, while attempts to crack down have largely stalled. For the millions of people in the United States dealing with scam attempts like McCarroll, there doesn’t seem to be any meaningful relief in sight.</p> <p>We mostly think about scam calls and texts in terms of their financial costs to the people who fall for them. Consumers reported \$5.8 billion in fraud to the Federal Trade Commission last year, a 70 percent increase from 2020. Falling for or engaging with one scam can lead to an increase in attempts. According to RoboKiller, an app for screening robocalls on phones, an average smartphone owner in the United States will get an estimated 42 spam texts and 28 spam calls a month. Once a number or email address spreads into more spammer databases, it can be bought and sold by the companies involved in the booming scam industry.</p> <p>Someone could come across any or all of these scams in a week: A text message from UPS with a link promising a delivery. A prerecorded phone call about a car warranty or bank issue. Emails that appear to be from Amazon or Apple customer service asking you to log in to your account. Shady replies on Facebook Marketplace for a chair you listed. Maybe a wrong-number message on WhatsApp from a chatty stranger.</p> <p>Beyond the financial repercussions, there’s a steep emotional cost for people who don’t lose a dollar, mental health experts say. Constant scam attempts can increase stress levels and strain relationships. Their negative impact on mental health is even worse when the scammers target people based on perceived weaknesses, like advanced age, loneliness or, in McCarroll’s case, an ongoing illness. That anxiety can spread to their worried family members, they say.</p> <p>Irene Kenyon’s family was in a good position to avoid scams. She’s the director of risk intelligence at risk assessment company FiveBy, and her father has two engineering master’s degrees. But in 2017, she got a panicked call from her mother. Her father had gone out and bought \$6,000 in gift cards at Target for a phone scammer who claimed to be their grandson. The man on the phone said he was in jail and needed to be bailed out. By the time Kenyon reached her dad, it was too late. He’d read the gift card numbers out over the phone.</p>



“What these people do is play on people’s emotions, they play on the fact that grandparents love their grandkids more than you can imagine, and all their logic will fly out the window,” Kenyon says. They reported the case to the police, and a special program in their state was able to reimburse them for part of the lost money.

At the time, her parents were embarrassed and she was angry, but now they talk every day and go over anything suspicious. She has taught them to never answer any of the unknown calls they get a day and to look closely at emails. She says they’re still tense about falling for something, and she worries about them day and night.

Many of these scams are easier to spot or screen with a little training, like looking for a misspelled email address or ignoring an unknown phone number on caller ID. Others scams are incredibly believable thanks to technology like spoofing, which lets the attacker fake a call from the number of someone you know, maybe even yourself.

A proud and protective mom of two adult daughters, Renee makes sure they both call her once a day to check in. When it looked like her oldest was calling at 11 p.m. on a recent weeknight, Renee and her husband were confused but answered right away. They were met with the gravelly voice of an unknown man on the other end.

“He was very agitated. He was very angry, very threatening,” says Renee, who spoke on the condition that her last name not be used for fear of being targeted again. “The first thing he said was, ‘I’m going to kill her. I’m going to get her. I don’t want to have to hurt her. I’ve been to jail before, and I don’t want to go back.’ ”

The scammer said he was holding Renee’s daughter hostage and wanted money to let her go, asking repeatedly for her Cash App information — an app Renee didn’t recognize. He threatened to slit her daughter’s throat. Renee believed him completely but managed to stay calm and continue talking to him, slowly collecting more hints that the situation wasn’t what it seemed. They sent police to their daughter’s home, where they found her safe and confused. The man was a scammer who had faked her number. When it was over, Renee’s calm broke and she began crying.

“I feel grateful, but I feel like they’ve invaded my space and my peace and that was trauma,” Renee says.

Those feelings are common, says Matthew Mimiaga, a professor at UCLA.

“Scam victims often suffer from a decrease in life satisfaction and are likely to have higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of happiness,” Mimiaga says.

Their lingering anxiety has real, physical side effects including feeling restless, wound-up or on edge, Mimiaga says. It could lead to people being easily fatigued, having difficulty concentrating, or even having headaches and other unexplained pains.

Anyone can be a target for phone and email scams, but the fallout can be worse for people who are older, says Iris Waichler, a licensed clinical social worker and author of “Role Reversal, How to Take Care of Yourself and Your Aging Parents.”

“They’re extremely vulnerable and lonely. The reason they’re targets is when someone reaches out, they’re sometimes just grateful to talk to somebody,” Waichler says.

Older people may already be worried about losing independence or appearing to have diminished mental capacity, and are more likely to keep an experience with scammers to themselves out of shame. The adult could be left with lower self esteem and higher self doubt, Waichler says.

There have been some changes to try to help people avoid scams, at least over texts and phone calls. In 2019, large carriers agreed to use technology known as STIR/SHAKEN to authenticate who is calling to

reduce robocalls and spoofed numbers. It's being adopted by smaller cellphone carriers this year. The FTC has also proposed a rule to address robotexts, but it's still pending. Phone makers are trying to combat the issue on their side with features that label some calls as possible spam, while companies like RoboKiller are making their own apps to screen and block.

Scammers, however, are always looking for new ways to adapt — and new targets to go after.

“As long as there's billions of dollars on the other end of it, it's not going to stop,” says Chester Wisniewski, a principal research scientist at security company Sophos.

For now, awareness and a few tools can lower the stress but not make it go away.

Pamela McCarroll's husband, voice actor Michael McCarroll, has a blocking app from his carrier, but he made sure it was off when his wife was in the hospital for a week this month. Every time he saw a call from an unknown number, his stomach dropped and he thought, “Oh God.” He was thankful it was just spam, every time.

[Return to Top](#)

## Terror Conditions

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 NCTC warns of Iran assassination plots</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/u-s-intelligence-warns-about-iranian-assassination-plots-report/">https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/u-s-intelligence-warns-about-iranian-assassination-plots-report/</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Iran's terrorism</a> campaign targeting top current and former U.S. government officials continues, according to a National Counterterrorism Center report obtained by <a href="#">Yahoo News</a>. The center reportedly sent an assessment on the threat to law-enforcement offices across the country last month.</p> <p>In the document, the National Counterterrorism Center reportedly warned that Iran is advancing a “multipronged campaign” against several U.S. officials, and especially those who played a role in the killing of Iranian Quds Force General Qasem Soleimani.</p> <p>“Since January 2021, Tehran has publicly expressed a willingness to conduct lethal operations inside the United States and has consistently identified former President Donald Trump, former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, and former CENTCOM Commander General Kenneth McKenzie as among its priority targets for retribution,” the report stated. “Iran would probably view the killing or prosecution of a US official it considers equivalent in rank and stature to Soleimani or responsible for his death as successful retaliatory actions.”</p> <p>The report cited a number of incidents linked to Iran's campaign against the U.S., including the attempted kidnapping of Iranian-American journalist <a href="#">Masih Alinejad</a> last year.</p> <p>Yahoo quotes the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' Behnam Ben Taleblu as calling it “baffling” that the Biden administration has not abandoned its talks with Iran over the assassination plots.</p> <p>Earlier this year, Secretary of State Antony Blinken <a href="#">seemed to confirm</a> during a congressional hearing that Iran was targeting current U.S. officials. Previously, it was reported that Iranian terrorism plots are specifically aimed at Pompeo, in addition to former national-security adviser John Bolton.</p> <p>In recent weeks, U.S. officials have attempted to break the logjam that has restricted Washington's nuclear talks with Tehran. Officials from the U.S. and Iran held indirect negotiations in Qatar last month — the first discussions since March — which were reported to have adjourned without any substantive breakthroughs.</p> <p>The two sides have been at an impasse over Iran's demands that the U.S. lift its designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization. U.S. officials have claimed for months that</p>

	<p>they would not lift the designation, a stance that President Biden described again today during an interview with an Israeli television network.</p> <p>In a statement to Yahoo, the National Security Council pledged that the U.S. “will protect and defend its citizens,” without commenting directly on the intelligence report, and said that U.S. reentry into the 2015 Iran nuclear deal is “in America’s national interest.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 US to keep IRGC on terror list</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/biden-says-iranian-military-unit-to-remain-on-us-terrorist-list#xj4y7vzkg">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-13/biden-says-iranian-military-unit-to-remain-on-us-terrorist-list#xj4y7vzkg</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>President Joe Biden said in an interview with an Israeli TV station that an elite Iranian military unit would remain designated a terrorist group by the US, even if that means he can’t secure a return to the multinational deal intended to restrain Iran’s nuclear program.</p> <p>He also said he wouldn’t rule out US military action to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon “if that was the last resort.”</p> <p>Biden answered “yes” after he was asked in the interview with Channel 12 news whether he was committed to keeping the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps on the US list of foreign terrorist organizations. Iran has demanded that the designation be lifted, as talks on the nuclear agreement remain stalled.</p> <p>But Biden said he would also continue to pursue a return to the nuclear accord with Iran, despite opposition by Israel’s government.</p> <p>“The only thing worse than the Iran that exists now is an Iran with nuclear weapons,” Biden said. “And if we can return to a deal and hold them tight -- I think it was a gigantic mistake for the last president to get out of the deal. They’re closer to a nuclear weapon now than they were before.”</p> <p>Former President Donald Trump scrapped the nuclear agreement with Iran that was reached by President Barack Obama and other world leaders. Trump said it didn’t sufficiently curb the Islamic Republic’s military activities. Tehran backs a number of governments and militant groups in the region hostile to Israel, including Hezbollah and Syria’s government.</p> <p>Biden also said in the interview that Democrats in the US who regard Israel as an apartheid state because of its treatment of the Palestinian territories are a minority in his party. Some progressives in the House have openly backed the so-called boycott, divestment, sanctions movement that aims at punishing the Israeli government for what advocates regard as Palestinian oppression.</p> <p>“There are a few of them. I think they’re wrong. I think they’re making a mistake,” Biden said. “Israel is a democracy. Israel is our ally.”</p> <p>“There’s no possibility,” he said, that the Democratic Party would turn against Israel.</p> <p>He added that he’s unconcerned about the possibility Benjamin Netanyahu will once again become Israeli prime minister, despite Netanyahu’s close relationship with Trump. Biden said he and Netanyahu have known each other for 40 years, know where they agree and disagree and “we make no bones about it.”</p> <p>Biden will meet with Netanyahu on Thursday, in addition to Israel’s current prime minister, Yair Lapid.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 Militia group founder jailed domestic terror</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.wcia.com/news/emily-claire-hari-sentenced-to-14-years-for-domestic-terrorism/">https://www.wcia.com/news/emily-claire-hari-sentenced-to-14-years-for-domestic-terrorism/</a>

URBANA, Ill. (WCIA)— Emily Claire Hari was sentenced to 14 years in prison for domestic terrorism crimes.

Formerly known as Michael B. Hari, Emily was sentenced for threats of violence, attempted arson, unlawful possession of a machine-gun, and unlawful possession of a firearm as a felon.

She previously pleaded guilty to all four charges. The government said in 2017 Hari started a militia group nicknamed the “White Rabbits.” Michael McWhorter, Joe Morris, Ellis J. Mack, and Wesley Johnson were a part of this militia group.

In 2017 the group engaged in repeated acts of violence, which they referred to as “jobs.” They obtained materials to make bombs, provided weapons and uniforms to the militia, and assigned rank as if they were truly a military group.

The group acquired and assembled four shotguns and assault rifles—some fully automatic. These weapons and thermite were stored in a locked safe at the militia’s “office” in Clarence, Ill.

Hari, McWhorter, Morris, and Johnson on November 7, 2017 planned to use a pipe bomb to set the Women’s Health Practice in Champaign on fire. However, the pipe bomb did not ignite and was safely recovered from law enforcement officers after a receptionist found it.

Then on December 16 of the same year, the militia traveled from Clarence to Ambia, Indiana to rob a Hispanic person they believed to be involved in drug trafficking. They wore their “White Rabbit” uniforms, and pretended to be law enforcement executing a search warrant. They handcuffed and zip-tied the residents—causing harm to one person. The militia group then returned to Clarence after robbing the residence.

Two times in December of the same year they traveled to several Walmart stores throughout Illinois to rob them. The militia, under Hari’s approval, entered the stores with weapons and confronted cashiers.

In January of 2018 Hari, McWhorter, and Morris attempted to sabotage railroad tracks near Effingham with a bomb. After the attempt the group sent ransom emails demanding \$190,000 in cryptocurrency or they would damage the railroad further.

February of the same year, they planted bomb making materials, a pipe bomb on the property of a person in Clarence. This attempt was to get this person in trouble with law enforcement prior to a court hearing for Hari. Hari was then facing criminal charges for allegedly assaulting someone. Hari emailed an “anonymous tip” to Federal authorities that there were explosive devices in a suitcase, and gray bag in a shed. The FBI responded and found multiple explosive devices, and a pipe bomb attached to a green propane tank.

After all of this, the militia group thought the FBI might search their office and seize their weapons, so they moved the weapons to another militia members home. The FBI seized their machine-guns, and then Hari, McWhorter, Morris, and Mack fled on foot hiding in the woods and abandoned barns. While in hiding they made a video requesting assistance from other militia members.

U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm found Hari’s crimes quite serious and wide-ranging and accepted the parties’ agreement of sentencing Hari to 14 years.

Then in December of 2020 after a jury trial, Hari was found guilty of her charges back in August 2017 relating to a firebombing of a Mosque in Minnesota. McWhorter and Morris were also involved. She was sentenced to 53 years for those charges.

McWhorter was sentenced to 15 years and 10 months in April, Morris was sentenced to 14 years and 2 months, and Mack was sentenced to 42 months (time served) for their participation in the crimes.

	<p>“Although the militia group started by Hari called itself the ‘Patriot Freedom Fighters,’ the members of the group convicted of federal crimes were not patriots but violent criminals,” said United States Attorney Gregory K. Harris. “Attacking innocent citizens and lawful facilities using threats and violence are not the acts of ‘patriots,’ and this conduct will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Once again, this case exemplifies the extraordinary investigative efforts of the FBI to bring individuals to justice who commit violent crimes.”</p> <p>“Emily Claire Hari represents the very real threat posed by domestic violent extremists in the United States,” said FBI Springfield Field Office Special Agent in Charge David Nanz. “The FBI’s counterterrorism team is designed to combat this type of violence and is committed to prioritize and gather intelligence to continually assess the threat picture. The FBI’s focus has been and will remain keeping the American people safe from threats or acts of violence.”</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Europol: attacks down, terrorism still threat</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.expatica.com/nl/general/attacks-down-terrorism-still-a-threat-to-eu-europol-248696/">https://www.expatica.com/nl/general/attacks-down-terrorism-still-a-threat-to-eu-europol-248696/</a>
GIST	<p><b>Attacks are down but terrorism remains a threat to the European Union due to the war in Ukraine and a rise in propaganda during the pandemic, Europol said Wednesday.</b></p> <p>The total number of successful, thwarted and failed attacks was 15 in 2021 — significantly lower than 57 the year before, Europol said in its annual report.</p> <p>This is due to a notable drop in the number of left-wing attacks, said the agency based in The Hague.</p> <p>But the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic represent a security threat for the years to come, added the document.</p> <p>“The report’s conclusions confirm that terrorism remains a real and present danger to the EU,” Europol chief Catherine De Bolle said in a statement.</p> <p>“At a time of geopolitical turmoil, the EU must maintain its counter-terrorism measures more than ever,” she added.</p> <p>“There is no doubt that the geopolitical changes and fallout from Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine will have a lasting impact on EU security,” she was quoted as saying in the report.</p> <p>The war has already attracted several radicalised individuals from the member states who have joined the fight on both sides, she said.</p> <p>She said the conflict is likely to trigger violent extremist reactions and grooming, especially on the internet.</p> <p>De Bolle said European nations needed to learn the lessons of the past when foreign fighters returned from the battlefields in the Middle East.</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic had separately made young people and minors especially vulnerable to radicalisation because of social isolation and time spent online, Europol said.</p> <p>Certain member states had seen anti-Covid-19 and anti-government extremism emerge in the form of open threats, online hate speech and the use of violence.</p> <p>In 2021, 388 suspects were detained in the EU for terrorism-related offences.</p> <p>More than two-thirds, 260 of the arrests, were made following investigations into violations linked to jihadist terrorism in Austria, France and Spain, Europol said.</p>

## Suspicious, Unusual

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Webb telescope: 5 things from first images
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/article/nasa-webb-telescope-images-galaxies.html">https://www.nytimes.com/article/nasa-webb-telescope-images-galaxies.html</a>
GIST	<p>NASA on Tuesday released five images from the early work of the James Webb Space Telescope. The pictures highlighted the great potential of the telescope to plumb the secrets of deep space. Below are some of the things we have learned so far.</p> <p><b>The telescope works really, really well</b></p> <p>NASA's experience with the Hubble Space Telescope sending back blurry images showed that advanced scientific instruments sometimes did not work as intended. Astronauts made multiple trips to the Hubble to repair it, but no such fixes were possible for the Webb, which is much farther from Earth than any human has traveled.</p> <p>After the anticipation and anxiety of the launch and then the deployment of the telescope, its mirrors and the sun shield, the mission's scientists then had to make sure that its scientific tool kit operated properly.</p> <p>They did, spectacularly, as Jane Rigby, the operations project scientist for the telescope, explained during a news conference Tuesday.</p> <p>"I had the very emotional reaction of 'Oh my goodness, it works,'" she said, describing the first razor-sharp test images the telescope sent home. "And it works better than we thought."</p> <p>Or as hundreds of scientists put it in a paper that was published online Tuesday but was not yet peer-reviewed, "The telescope and instrument suite have demonstrated the sensitivity, stability, image quality and spectral range that are necessary to transform our understanding of the cosmos through observations spanning from near-Earth asteroids to the most distant galaxies."</p> <p><b>We'll see deeper into the universe's past than ever</b></p> <p>President Joe Biden on Monday introduced an image made by the Webb telescope that NASA officials and astronomers hailed as one of the deepest images yet taken of the cosmos, a mark that will probably be passed soon as more data spews forth from NASA's computers.</p> <p>The image of a distant star cluster called SMACS 0723 revealed the presence of still more-distant galaxies spilled across the sky. The light from those galaxies, magnified into visibility by the gravitational field of the cluster, originated more than 13 billion years ago.</p> <p>Astronomers theorize that the most distant, earliest stars may be unlike the stars we see today. The first stars were composed of pure hydrogen and helium left over from the Big Bang, and they could grow far more massive than the sun — and then collapse quickly and violently into supermassive black holes of the kind that now populate the centers of most galaxies.</p> <p><b>We'll uncover the atmospheres of distant planets</b></p> <p>The spectra for the Jupiter-size exoplanet WASP-96b was not the most impressive image put up on screens Tuesday — rather than mind-bending cosmic cliffs it showed slopes of a chart recorded as the planet passed in front of its star 1,120 light-years away. But when astronomers who operate the Webb telescope at the Space Science Telescope Institute in Baltimore saw it, they gasped and applauded.</p> <p>"I'm beyond stoked to be sharing this with you," said Nestor Espinoza, an astronomer there.</p> <p>The planet had been studied before from the ground and with the Hubble. But the Webb telescope picked up evidence of water vapor, hazes and some previously unseen clouds, too. That surprised scientists.</p>



While WASP-96b is highly unlikely to be home to anything living, using the same techniques could reveal whether smaller, rocky worlds orbiting other stars are habitable.

“I think we will be able to find planets that we think are interesting — you know, good possibilities for life,” said Megan Mansfield, an astronomer at the University of Arizona. “But we won’t necessarily be able to just identify life immediately.”

The relatively small size of these exoplanets has made them extremely difficult to study, until now. The Webb telescope will let astronomers look more closely at these worlds.

### **We’ll discover the unexpected**

The Webb presentation gave us gasp-inducing images of the Southern Ring Nebula, a sphere of gas and dust belched by a dying star, and Stephan’s Quintet, a grouping of galaxies millions of light-years away.

But the most striking image was of the Carina Nebula, a vast, swirling cloud of dust that is both a star nursery and home to some of the most luminous and explosive stars in the Milky Way. Seen in infrared, the nebula resembled a looming, eroded coastal cliff dotted with hundreds of stars that astronomers had never seen before.

“It took me a while to figure out what to call out in this image,” said Amber Straughn, a deputy project scientist for the telescope, as she pointed to a craggy structure.

The picture also contained structures that scientists couldn’t explain, like one weird, curving feature.

“As always, there is room for the unexpected,” said Amaya Moro-Martin, an astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute who presented the image to her colleagues there Tuesday. “We have no idea what this is.”

Expect many more such discoveries from the Webb — things never before seen, and in need of an explanation.

### **The telescope remains fragile**

For a spacecraft like the James Webb Space Telescope, it was inevitable that pieces of cosmic dust would hit its mirrors. Still, it was an unwelcome surprise for NASA officials to find that one of the telescope’s mirrors had been damaged by a micrometeoroid strike in late May and that the hit was larger than had been expected.

NASA officials said the distortion was barely noticeable and the performance of Webb still exceeds all of its requirements. Engineers also tweaked the position of the damaged mirror to cancel out part of the distortion.

Before the incident was reported, four smaller micrometeoroids had already hit the telescope.

“The biggest concern on our minds is just the micrometeorite environment,” said Thomas Zurbuchen, the associate administrator of NASA for science missions.

Zurbuchen said NASA is evaluating flight options to increase the likelihood that any dust that does strike the telescope hits the backside, not the front of the mirrors.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Long Island: 5 <sup>th</sup> shark attack in 2 weeks
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/5th-shark-attack-weeks-off-long-island-leaves/story?id=86743416">https://abcnews.go.com/US/5th-shark-attack-weeks-off-long-island-leaves/story?id=86743416</a>
GIST	The fifth shark attack in two weeks off Long Island was reported Wednesday evening.

A 49-year-old man from Arizona was bitten by a shark shortly after 6 p.m. at Seaview Beach, Suffolk police said.

The man "was standing in waist-deep water when a shark came up from behind and bit him on the left wrist and buttocks," police said in a statement.

The victim was able to walk out of the water and was transported via a Suffolk County Police helicopter to Stony Brook University Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, police said.

The attack comes nearly 12 hours after a surfer was bitten by a shark around 7:45 a.m. on Wednesday near Smith Point Beach, according to Suffolk County officials.

Officials believe the attack was by a tiger shark, which left behind a 4-inch gash on the surfer's leg.

After being knocked off his paddle board, officials said that the surfer "took a punch" at the shark, which seemed to be coming back for another bite.

Luckily, officials said, a wave carried the surfer and his board back to shore before any further damage was done.

A park ranger helped the surfer once back on shore, and called 911, officials said.

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said at a briefing on Wednesday morning that the beach was expected to reopen at 1 p.m. if no further sightings took place.

Bellone said that Wednesday's incident is "an indication that what we are looking at is something of a new normal."

Bellone added that sharks seem to be closer to the shore, which will continue to make interactions between them and humans more frequent.

"Fortunately, we haven't seen significant injuries, nor do we expect to, but it is something to be aware and conscious of," Bellone said.

Bellone warned swimmers to stay out of the water when lifeguards are not on duty, to avoid dusk and dawn, not wear shiny jewelry and not go into the water if bleeding.

During the past few weeks, officials have been monitoring beaches via boat, helicopter and drone to account for the uptick in shark incidents off of Nassau and Suffolk county beaches.

The first of the area's recent attacks came on June 30, when a 37-year-old swimmer was bitten on his right foot near Jones Beach.

Just four days later, Smith Point and Cupsogue beaches were closed after a lifeguard was bitten by a shark during a water rescue training simulation.

Zachari Gallo, a Sayville High School special education teacher, was training with other lifeguards when he was pretending to be a drowning victim in the water. Suddenly he felt the shark's tail and knew he needed to get to shore, according to an interview with New York ABC station WABC.

Fortunately, after a bite to the chest and hand, Gallo only needed two stitches and antibiotics, Suffolk County officials said.

Less than a week later, another lifeguard endured a shark bite off of Ocean Beach on Fire Island.

	<p>The lifeguard was only about 150 to 200 yards off the shore, treading water, when they were bitten around the ankle and received minor injuries, the chief lifeguard of the Ocean Beach District said.</p> <p>Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman held a press conference on Sunday, saying, "It is relatively safe to go in the water, but you have to take precautions."</p> <p>"If you're gonna go in the ocean, it's good to go with a partner. Always go on a protected beach where there are lifeguards, always stay together and be conscious of your surroundings," he said, even wading into the water himself. "If you do those things, you will be safe."</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

## Crime, Criminals

[Top of page](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Russia warns US: no pressure on prisoner
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/14/brittney-griner-russia-cannabis-trial/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/14/brittney-griner-russia-cannabis-trial/</a>
GIST	<p>RIGA, Latvia — Russia’s Foreign Ministry on Thursday warned Washington not to exert pressure on Moscow over prisoner exchanges, hours before American WNBA star Brittney Griner arrived at a suburban court to face a third hearing in her trial on drug charges that could see her serve 10 years in prison.</p> <p>Are you on Telegram? Subscribe to our channel for the latest updates on Russia's war in Ukraine. Amid intense pressure on the Biden administration to secure Griner’s release, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned that this was “futile” and claimed that U.S. officials were trying to use the pressure as leverage.</p> <p>“We urge the U.S. authorities not to exploit this sensitive matter affecting the fates of certain individuals, and we advise them to abandon futile attempts to pressure us,” Zakharova said.</p> <p>She called on Washington to “work through established channels. It simply won’t work any other way.”</p> <p>It is the second warning in eight days from a senior Russian official that the pressure around Griner’s cause would do her cause no good. Last week, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov hinted that there were channels for negotiation on the matter, but only after her trial is complete. He also warned against public “hype” over the case.</p> <p>Zakharova was answering a question from state-owned RIA Novosti on whether talks with Washington on a prisoner exchange were underway, amid rising speculation about a possible swap involving Griner and Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout. He is serving 25 years in the United States for conspiring to sell arms to a foreign terrorist group and conspiring to kill U.S. citizens.</p> <p>When she pleaded guilty last week to carrying cannabis oil in vape cartridges, Griner maintained that she did not intend to break Russian law and had been in a rush when she packed, with the cartridges ending up in her luggage by accident. She is not expected to testify at Thursday’s hearing; her legal team planned instead to call witnesses in her defense.</p> <p>It is unclear when Griner will be sentenced. Her attorney, Maria Blagovolina, said last week that the legal team would ask the judge for a lenient sentence based on Griner’s guilty plea.</p> <p>According to the prosecutors’ case, Russian customs officials found two vape cartridges containing .702 grams of cannabis oil in her baggage at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo International Airport in February, a week before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Griner was in the country to play for Russian team UMMC Ekaterinburg during the WNBA offseason.</p>

The State Department says Griner has been wrongfully detained by Russia, along with another American, former Marine Paul Whelan, a security consultant convicted of spying who has been in detention since December 2018.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said his top priority is to secure the release of Griner, Whelan and other Americans wrongly imprisoned overseas.

Asked if the deteriorating relations between Washington and Moscow impacted the chances of a prisoner exchange, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that it never discussed prisoner swaps. "And relations have indeed worsened. That's all I can say."

The Kremlin denies that Griner's trial is political or that she is a hostage, as her supporters in the United States believe.

In April, Moscow swapped Marine veteran Trevor Reed for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot serving a 20-year prison sentence in Connecticut for drug trafficking. Reed had been in poor health for months. He received a nine-year sentence in Russia after being convicted of assault that endangered the lives of police officers. Reed consistently said he was innocent.

The White House said last week that Griner was being held under "intolerable circumstances." President Biden and Vice President Harris called Griner's wife, Cherelle Griner, and told her they were doing all they could to secure Griner's freedom.

Griner recently wrote to Biden begging him not to forget her and other detainees, saying, "I'm terrified I might be here forever."

State Department efforts to free her have been complicated by the diplomatic chill between Washington and Moscow since President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Russian officials accuse the United States of using Ukraine as an "anti-Russia" project.

As relations worsened and diplomatic efforts to avert the war failed, the State Department issued an alert to Americans in January not to travel to Russia and warned those in the country to leave if they could.

Biden's phone call to Cherelle Griner and his letter to Brittney Griner angered Whelan's family, who already were upset that he was left behind in the April prisoner exchange and concerned that his case was not receiving the same attention from officials as Griner's. After Whelan's family expressed their anger in media interviews, Biden called Whelan's sister, Elizabeth, last week.

"Everyone wants to see this come to an end across the board," Elizabeth Whelan said on Wednesday, adding that the Russian judicial system had dragged out her brother's case and expressing concern that Griner's case might follow the same pattern. "You never know quite what to expect," she said.

Her brother had traveled to Moscow for a friend's wedding and was arrested in his hotel room. He was convicted of spying in a closed trial in 2020, receiving a 16-year sentence. He said throughout the trial that he had been framed.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/14 Bomb threats disrupt college campuses
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/07/14/bomb-threats-disrupt-campus-across-country">https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/07/14/bomb-threats-disrupt-campus-across-country</a>
GIST	<p>A series of bomb threats this week targeted college campuses across the country, many of them community colleges. While no bombs have been found, the threats come amid a surge of such menaces this summer, which are concerning to law enforcement officials and college leaders, who say they're disruptive to campus life and disturbing to students and employees.</p> <p>Two Eastern Florida State College <a href="#">campuses closed</a> and reopened after evacuations Wednesday in response to a bomb threat.</p>

A slew of community colleges in Virginia were targeted Tuesday, including Eastern Shore Community College, Tidewater Community College, Virginia Peninsula Community College and Paul D. Camp Community College. Regent University and Norfolk State University, a historically Black institution, received threats, as well, according to [13News Now](#), an ABC affiliate news station in Virginia.

Karen Campbell, vice president of student affairs at Tidewater Community College, said Chesapeake Police Department officers and firefighters searched the campus after a threat around 11:20 a.m. Tuesday and determined the threat was unfounded. Summer is a “slower time at the college,” but she said some students, faculty and staff members were on campus for summer courses.

“Our priority is always to make sure that our students, faculty and staff are safe,” she said.

The Wheeling Police Department in West Virginia also received a call saying there was a bomb in the main campus building at West Virginia Northern Community College shortly before 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, which led the department to investigate. After the building was evacuated, an explosive-detection dog accompanied officers who searched in and around the building, said Philip Stahl, public information officer at the Wheeling Police Department. The department issued an all-clear announcement less than two hours later.

“Nothing was located,” Stahl said. “Obviously it was a hoax in nature, and we’re continuing to investigate the phone call that was made at this point.”

He noted that local media outlets have also reported threats at nearby institutions, so the department is reaching out to other law enforcement agencies to compare the threat calls. Threats came in that same afternoon at higher ed institutions in Ohio, including Belmont College, the Ohio University Zanesville and Zane State campuses, and Washington State Community College in Marietta. Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis., also received a threat Tuesday afternoon, [Kenosha News](#) reported.

“Obviously it’s rare ... that all of these kind of happened at once,” Stahl said. “We’re doing our part to see where the [phone] number came from, who the individual was on that line. We’ll be talking to our local agents here at the FBI office to kind of alert them on what we know and what happened on our end. They’re able to investigate across the country, so they would probably take a more broad look at what the heck is happening here.”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation press office issued a statement saying that the agency “is aware of bomb threats received by multiple colleges and universities.”

“The FBI takes all potential threats seriously and we regularly work with our law enforcement partners to determine their credibility,” the statement read. “As always, we would like to remind members of the public that if they observe anything suspicious to report it to law enforcement immediately.”

Tuesday’s incidents are the latest surge in a barrage of threats that has been going on for weeks.

For example, Ogden-Weber Technical College in Utah was evacuated July 6 because of a bomb threat and resumed normal operations the next day.

“The College thanks our security staff, employees and students for following established safety protocols resulting in a safe and swift evacuation of the campus,” reads a [statement](#) from the college. “A special thanks to our outstanding law enforcement and emergency services partners who helped secure and clear the campus.”

Two Austin Community College campuses, the Alkek Fine Arts Center at Weatherford College, the University of North Texas Health Science Center and Dallas College’s Richland campus received threats on July 7.

“Evacuate location by foot immediately,” Dallas College [tweeted](#). “Move as far as possible from building(s). Not at site? STAY AWAY for your own safety.”

Cleveland State University [received a threat](#) the next day, as did the University of Providence in Montana and at least four institutions in Maryland, including Carroll Community College, Hagerstown Community College, St. Mary’s College of Maryland and Wor-Wic Community College.

Robert Mueck, director of public safety at St. John’s College in Maryland and a member of the domestic preparedness committee for the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, said his email was “blowing up” as campus public safety officers conferred on email Listservs about the growing number of threats.

“Communications were bouncing back and forth,” he said. “We were very much on top of it. People are talking about it.”

The latest threats also come after bomb threats swept historically Black colleges and universities nationwide earlier this year, taking a [toll on the mental health](#) of students, faculty and staff members and prompting a [congressional hearing](#) in March.

While bomb threats are usually unfounded, “that doesn’t mean [students] aren’t going to be scared,” Mueck said. “There are some students who are absolutely shook up about it.”

Some students, parents and employees of the colleges have been posting on social media about their shock and concern about the bomb threats.

“MY COLLEGE GOT A BOMB THREAT EARLIER WHAT,” one student [wrote on Twitter](#). “Everyone’s fine and the campus is reopening now after an hour and a half but WHAT.”

“My college kid is home early today because some idiot called in a bomb threat on campus,” a parent [tweeted](#). “Thankful he’s safe, but frustrated that we live in a world like this.”

Mueck believes more bomb threats against campuses are happening because technology today makes it easier to make anonymous calls, and teenagers in particular “egg each other on” to make these calls over social media. For example, he highlighted the case of a [teenage gamer](#) who was reported to be involved in a spate of bomb threats in 2021, and that of a group of people using Discord, an instant messaging platform. He’s struck, however, by the number of community colleges being targeted and said he doesn’t know why these institutions have become a focus of those making the threats.

James Shaeffer, president of Eastern Shore Community College, said from his perspective, the threat against his college felt like a “one-off” incident rather than any kind of concerted effort to target community colleges. The college had to evacuate middle school and high school students on campus for summer camps, but law enforcement officials swiftly determined there was no bomb.

“If anything, it was inconvenient,” he said.

Martha Parham, senior vice president of public relations for the American Association of Community Colleges, said she is monitoring the treats, “But I’m not sure if there is an increase in occurrences or if we’re just hearing about it more often now with social media.”

Community college presidents are nonetheless “always concerned about the safety of their students and their teams, their faculty and staff” and have plans in place for potential threats, she added.

She also noted that it’s sometimes easier for community colleges to keep students safe in the event of a threat because the colleges often don’t have students living in dorms.



	<p>Mueck said law enforcement officials and campus leaders need to strike a balance between “not overreacting but not failing to react.”</p> <p>“It’s the cheapest form of terrorism there is,” he said. “It’s the cheapest form of harassment. You have to do something, but some of these campuses are shutting down completely, sending everyone home or taking other kinds of action. And it really impacts the academic program of the institution. We have to be careful about that, because with the press of a phone call, you can make a college campus just go haywire.”</p> <p>He said that’s exactly what people who make these threats want.</p> <p>“Threats are made to create anxiety,” he said. “The person making the threat wants you to react.”</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 Seattle Hip Hop concert: 50 shots fired</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://seattlemedium.com/50-shots-fired-at-hip-hop-concert/">https://seattlemedium.com/50-shots-fired-at-hip-hop-concert/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Over 50 rounds were fired during a South Seattle Hip Hop concert. A concert at Washington Hall in South Seattle ended in gunfire on Sunday night, according to Seattle police and social media videos from the scene. Performing were rappers D.B. Boutabag and Capolow for their Road Trip Summer Tour. The tour was in Portland the night before. Officers found two people who sustained injuries during their escape from the scene. Seattle has been a good and safe destination for Hip Hop events.</p> <p>In fact, Seattle will again be the location for the 2022 West Coast Hip Hop Awards event next month. That event has been featured in several west coast cities, including Seattle, over the last 16 years and has always been peaceful – bringing old school Hip Hop artists and a variety of Hop Hop heads and luminaries together. The violence that happened at this recent show will be tempered by the coming awards show dedicated to recognizing the impact that the West Coast have on Hip Hop.</p> <p>Phone cam witnesses provided information about the shooting incident. According to social media videos from the scene, multiple gunshots were heard inside the venue and fans were seen scrambling for the exits.</p> <p>This all took place just before midnight on Sunday. Police responded to a report of multiple gunshots at Washington Hall, located at 153 14th Avenue in South Seattle. The cops arrived and found cases and bullet fragments in a parking lot. There we’re also multiple damaged vehicles and buildings along 14th Avenue, between East Fir Street and East Spruce Street.</p> <p>According to police, there were two shooting scenes along 14th Avenue, with the first in front of Washington Hall. The second scene was at the corner of 12th Avenue South and East Yesler Way.</p> <p>One fleeing car was nabbed by cops. A vehicle involved in a collision nearby was impounded by Seattle police after the driver and passengers fled the scene. Police believe the vehicle was involved in the shooting.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 SPD, mayor target crime hot spots</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-police-mayor-target-crime-hot-spots-little-saigon-neighborhood-has-mixed-results">https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-police-mayor-target-crime-hot-spots-little-saigon-neighborhood-has-mixed-results</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>SEATTLE — For months, the city of Seattle has been cracking down on crime hotspots like 12th and Jackson in the Little Saigon neighborhood.</p> <p>The so-called “hot spots policing” approach is getting a lot of praise from some people and ongoing questions from others who live and work in the neighborhood.</p> <p>Before the new plan was implemented, 12th and Jackson was a trouble spot that attracted shootings, stabbings, and a black market with stolen goods.</p>

The Mayor's office and Seattle Police have taken a "hot-spots policing" approach to tackle crime. That means bringing in extra resources like the mobile precinct van and increasing police patrols.

New data shows how many crimes were reported specifically at 12th and Jackson in January. That number was 50.

It dramatically dropped after the extra resources moved in February, March, and so on.

Nearby businesses say the approach worked. But they also say crime is coming back.

"It's a lot better. A lot cleaner. A lot safer and I saw more police cars around here. So, we feel very happy," said June Huynh of Viet Wah Supermarket.

"It looks better because they cleared the area under the Seven Stars Pepper Restaurant," said Jack Nie with Sichuanese Cuisine Restaurant. "That area is clear. (But) they just moved across the street. There is still a lot of criminal activities going on. There was a shooting right by the restaurant a couple of weeks ago."

Recently, there have been shootings and a stabbing near 12th and Jackson.

During the Mayor's "Operation New Day" effort in February, the bus stop in front of 12th and Jackson was removed. A mobile precinct van was stationed across the street. And, multiple arrests were made.

Critics say the "hot spots policing" approach may work for a while, but it seems to push the illegal activity somewhere else.

On this given day, the mobile precinct van moved to the parking lot on Jackson Street between the Sichuanese Cuisine Restaurant and Viet Wah Supermarket.

The police van is parked directly across the street from a different bus stop. Businesses say that bus stop is a new trouble spot-- where stolen goods are often sold. It is less than a block away from 12th and Jackson.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Video deepens Uvalde families' pain, anger
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/uvalde-police-video.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/uvalde-police-video.html</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Texas — Families of those killed in a mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas, in May voiced a mix of sorrow and anger on Wednesday after seeing a video showing how armed officers stood around waiting before confronting the gunman.</p> <p>For the first time, the delayed response that had been <a href="#">exhaustively described and debated</a> could be seen in all its agonizing detail, rekindling the outrage at officers who failed to rush to the aid of children inside two classrooms where 19 students were killed, along with two teachers.</p> <p>The parents, who had fought for weeks to gain clarity on what exactly took place inside Robb Elementary School on May 24, were finally able to watch part of the minute-by-minute police response along with viewers around the country after The Austin American-Statesman and KVUE <a href="#">posted the video on Tuesday</a>.</p> <p>The decision to do so brought immediate criticism from officials, who had planned to unveil video from the school on Sunday as part of an investigatory report by a special Texas House committee, and underscored what has been weeks of shifting official accounts, partial revelations and resistance to demands — including from the mayor of Uvalde — for information to be made public.</p> <p>The video published on Tuesday had been previously reviewed by The New York Times <a href="#">as part of its reporting on the police response in Uvalde</a> — a protracted 77 minutes from the time the gunman entered the school to when officers confronted and killed him. It consists primarily of surveillance footage from</p>

a single hallway camera inside the school, with muffled sound, at times synchronized with an officer's body-worn camera.

But dozens of other videos, including from the body cameras of officers inside and outside the school, have yet to be made public. And though the video documents the movements of officers — some of whom were heavily armed and armored — it does not answer the central questions that have haunted many families: Why did those officers wait so long, and who, ultimately, is to blame for the delay?

“It’s horrible, as far as police response,” said State Senator Roland Gutierrez, who represents the area and has been pressing for more information to be released. The video showing only portions of the police response did nothing to explain the delays, he said, and appeared to be part of an ongoing effort to control public perception of the event.

“People are asking for transparency, and for this Hollywood version — is this supposed to shut up a bunch of people who are pissed off about the government’s response?” he said. “Because all it does for me is it opens up a whole hell of a lot more questions.”

Questions remained about the role of large agencies at the scene such as the Department of Public Safety and the Border Patrol, which have said their officers were not in command of the scene. “There were systemic failures where nobody listened to anybody,” Mr. Gutierrez said.

The video provided a window into the sheer number of officers who passed through the halls of the school before the gunman was confronted, but gave little clarity as to the orders — or lack of orders — given to those officers, who like most police officers had been trained to rush toward gunfire in the event of a school shooting.

“They went to where they were supposed to be. But they didn’t go in for action,” said Vincent Salazar, whose granddaughter Layla Salazar died in the shooting. “It’s like it didn’t matter about these children, the way they responded. They were just standing there. That’s what I took from it. This is a horrific thing.”

The video does not contain images of the victims. Still, long stretches of time when officers were standing idle, some of them looking at their phones, were also hard to watch, Mr. Salazar said, particularly one moment when [an officer in a helmet and a vest strolled to a hand-sanitizer dispenser](#).

“What I saw, that idiot putting sanitizer on his hands, it was painful to watch,” he said. “They were not there for their own health. They were supposed to be there to protect the families, to protect the babies.”

Joe Moody, a Texas House Democrat and one of three members of the investigatory committee, jumped to the defense of one of the officers seen looking at his phone.

“This is the husband of teacher Eva Mireles, who contacted him on his phone from her classroom while he was on-scene to say that she’d been shot and was dying,” Mr. Moody said Wednesday in a message on Twitter, referring to [a teacher who survived for a time but later died](#). “I’d not planned to speak publicly until the report was released, but I couldn’t say nothing seeing this man, who’s lost everything, maligned as if he was indifferent or actively malicious. Context matters.”

Several relatives of victims said they were glad that the video came out, so that officials could no longer hide behind their own version of events.

But the video does not depict the decision-making at the scene nor the role played by Chief Pete Arredondo, the head of Uvalde’s small school district police force, who the state’s top law enforcement official, Steven McCraw, has said was the incident commander during the massacre.

Mr. McCraw, during a [lengthy hearing in the State Senate last month](#), laid the blame for what he called an “abject failure” of police response squarely at the feet of Chief Arredondo. The chief has not spoken

publicly, but he [told The Texas Tribune](#) that he did not consider himself the incident commander. He blamed the delay on the need to locate a key to the classroom where the gunman was holed up, though it has never been certain that the door was locked. It was not clear that the chief could be seen at any point in the video.

Martin Herrera, the grandfather of one of the victims, Jose Flores, said he watched to see the moment he had read about, in which Chief Arredondo claimed to have tried different keys to the door, but did not see it.

What is clear from the video is how easily the gunman entered the school at 11:33 a.m. on May 24 — two days before the end of school — and how quickly he was able to get into a pair of connected classrooms. The door had been “unsecured,” Mr. McCraw, the director of the Department of Public Safety, said during the legislative hearing.

The video showed that most of the shooting occurred between the time the gunman entered the classrooms and when officers, including at least one who had a long gun, arrived minutes later and approached the classroom door. They were met by gunfire and retreated down the hallway, where they remained for more than 40 minutes as more long guns arrived along with ballistic shields.

They only approached the doors again when gunfire erupted. And then, again, they waited.

The video did not contain footage of officers confronting and shooting the gunman, nor any images of victims. Yet several family members said the sight of the officers simply standing in the hallway — and early on, falling back — was upsetting in itself.

They had been steeling themselves to watch the video over the coming weekend, when they were promised by the State House committee that they would see it before the public did. So when the video was published suddenly on Tuesday, it came as a shock.

The mayor of Uvalde, Don McLaughlin, who has urged public release of information about the police response, called the publication “a cheap stunt to sell headlines and TV time.”

Mr. McLaughlin said a member of the Texas House committee told him that he had urged the reporter who obtained the video not to publish it until families had an opportunity to review it.

The Austin American-Statesman published an editorial [explaining its reason for publicizing the video](#), saying it was part of an effort by a group of news organizations, which includes The New York Times, to obtain videos, 911 calls and other records under a public information request.

Those efforts have been denied by the Department of Public Safety, which is leading the state investigation, and other agencies, including the local district attorney, citing various investigative exemptions.

A link to the Austin newspaper’s article about the video appeared on Jesus Rizo’s phone Tuesday afternoon. Mr. Rizo, who is the uncle of one of the victims, Jacklyn Cazares, started to click the link when his phone rang: “Whatever you do, don’t look at the video,” he recalled another relative telling him.

Mr. Rizo immediately tried to warn other family members. “It was hurtful, to think a video was out and they were not ready for it,” he said. “I just can’t believe that it was rolled out like that,” he added. “I think they need to see the video. But they needed to be warned first.”

Still, he said, he was glad it provided some clarity amid the shifting narratives and finger-pointing between agencies.

	As he watched the images of officers rushing into the school hallway and then retreating, Mr. Rizo said he fought his urge to yell, “Why aren’t they going in? What’s taking so long?”
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Shooting erupts from 3 vehicles on I-5</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/wsp-investigating-shooting-i-5-near-tukwila/3EN3R46UDVBNDP5OYV22QNUEA/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/wsp-investigating-shooting-i-5-near-tukwila/3EN3R46UDVBNDP5OYV22QNUEA/</a>
GIST	<p>KING COUNTY, Wash. — Troopers are investigating after gunfire rang out on southbound Interstate 5, north of State Route 900, just before 5 p.m. Wednesday in Tukwila.</p> <p>Shots were fired from three vehicles.</p> <p>Trooper Rick Johnson said it all started with a confrontation between a Kia and a Dodge Challenger, which resulted in people in both cars shooting at each other.</p> <p>When those cars pulled into the road from the shoulder, a nearby Dodge Charger with children inside was struck multiple times by gunfire, investigators said.</p> <p>The driver of the Charger then pulled out a gun and fired a shot at the Kia through the windshield. No one was hurt and no one was arrested.</p> <p>Troopers are asking anyone who witnessed or has information about the incident to call 911.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Accused vandals members of a hate group</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/olympia/accused-olympia-vandals-among-those-arrested-pride-event-in-idaho/281-20cef358-4a9a-4a51-9d6f-8b614581f02f">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/olympia/accused-olympia-vandals-among-those-arrested-pride-event-in-idaho/281-20cef358-4a9a-4a51-9d6f-8b614581f02f</a>
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. — The two men accused of vandalizing an Olympia mural last fall were arrested last month on riot charges related to a <a href="#">pride event in Idaho</a>.</p> <p>Olympia police said Spencer Simpson and Colton Brown are members of <a href="#">Patriot Front</a>, a nationally recognized white nationalist hate group.</p> <p>Detectives said the two were part of a group who <a href="#">painted over a mural</a> designed to support the LGBTQ+ community in downtown Olympia back in October 2021.</p> <p>According to court documents, Simpson and Brown were identified on videos of the incident, recorded by fellow Patriot Front members.</p> <p>Simpson appeared before an Olympia municipal court judge Wednesday and pleaded not guilty to one count of aiding and abetting graffiti.</p> <p>Brown did not appear, and the judge issued a warrant for Brown's arrest.</p> <p>Neither man has prior criminal convictions in Washington, but they both were part of a group arrested in Idaho last month.</p> <p>According to detectives, 31 Patriot Front members were planning on starting a riot at a pride event in Coeur D’Alene.</p> <p>“These people are just low down dirt dogs,” said Anna Schlecht, with the Unity in the Community organization.</p> <p>Schlecht helped get the mural designed in 2014, as a reaction to hate crimes in downtown Olympia.</p>

	<p>“We wanted to send out a really strong message that Olympia embraces the entire community, including the LGBTQ communities,” said Schlecht.</p> <p>Until the incident last October, she said the mural had not been vandalized.</p> <p>After volunteers cleaned up the mural, it was taken down and is being kept in storage. It had been in front of a building scheduled to be demolished and replaced with low-income housing.</p> <p>Schlecht said while it’s not clear when the mural will be on display again in Olympia.</p> <p>“This mural means so much to our community, and it rattled people to their core to think that Patriot Front was trying to erase the LGBTQ community,” said Schlecht.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 SCSO: drive-by shooting injures 2 teens</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/2-people-injured-lynnwood-shooting-police/281-cd72a425-e001-4058-a303-4ded703623ba">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/2-people-injured-lynnwood-shooting-police/281-cd72a425-e001-4058-a303-4ded703623ba</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>LYNNWOOD, Wash. — Two teens were injured in a drive-by shooting Wednesday in Lynnwood, according to the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office (SCSO).</p> <p>Several teens were walking on the sidewalk on the 3500 block of 164th Street Southwest when a boy and a girl were hit by gunfire, according to SCSO. The group of teens returned fire at the suspects in a vehicle.</p> <p>Two nearby houses were also struck by gunfire.</p> <p>Both victims were taken to Harborview Medical Center with non-life-threatening injuries. The teens involved in the shooting are believed to be between the ages of 15 and 17, according to SCSO. Deputies believe the incident is gang-related.</p> <p>There is a large police presence in the area while officers investigate. Drivers are asked to expect delays and take alternative routes.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a>

<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>07/13 Bellevue police property crime crackdown</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/bellevue/bellevue-police-hot-spot-policing-anti-crime-initiative/281-89e78d25-1743-4ecd-a641-c1088149ac97">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/bellevue/bellevue-police-hot-spot-policing-anti-crime-initiative/281-89e78d25-1743-4ecd-a641-c1088149ac97</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>BELLEVUE, Wash. — Bellevue police are cracking down on crime by upping patrols in “hot spots” as part of the department's recent anti-crime initiative.</p> <p>Police said like many places Bellevue is seeing an uptick in property crime.</p> <p>The department launched a crime data map that shows where incidents are happening across the city which is updated every 48 hours. The majority of the crime is theft.</p> <p>Patrick Hill has lived in his Bellevue home for more than 20 years and is a recent target of mail theft.</p> <p>“It’s been a rash. In the last 5 weeks there's been 5 break-ins,” said Hill.</p> <p>Hill keeps a look out on his mailbox and has cameras surrounding his home.</p> <p>“I have a buzzer in my bedroom and I just call 911 and half the time they catch them.”</p> <p>Hill has reported 25 mail thefts to police and says it has resulted in 12 felony arrests.</p>



Bellevue police said property crime is up 22%. The department said crime started to increase once COVID restrictions were eased.

“The beginning of this year, man, it caught our attention. The numbers were pretty high, and they were going up fast,” said Capt. Darryl McKinney, with the Bellevue Police Department (BPD).

That's led BPD to increase police presence in the city's hot spots, which includes downtown.

“A lot of it is occurring at stores where people are shoplifting,” said McKinney.

Police said detectives work closely with store loss prevention like in a recent case where a Bellevue man was arrested and accused of stealing thousands of dollars of merchandise from Fred Meyer.

Police said each hot spot will have its own plan.

“That can be high visibility with just more patrol cops. It could be a combination of resources, like patrol, traffic officers, and officers on bicycles. We've had undercover resources dedicated to certain operations,” said Capt. McKinney.

The agency's anti-crime patrols are also focusing on apartment complexes and neighborhoods that have been hit by car prowlers and catalytic converter thefts. The initiative also cracks down on DUIs which police said is a big problem downtown.

“Unfortunately, people still drink and drive,” said McKinney.

Police said the most important part is reporting because they use that data to identify hot spots.

For Hill, his reporting landed him an award from police, but keeping his neighbors safe is second nature.

“I'm retired coastguard and I've spent all my life helping and protecting people. It's just one of the things I do because of who I am,” said Hill.

Bellevue police said it's still fine-tuning its “hot spot” initiative but is already seeing an impact.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Guilty pleas: smuggling illegal animal parts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/two-congolese-men-plead-guilty-in-smuggling-ring-that-brought-illegal-ivory-rhino-horn-into-u-s/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/two-congolese-men-plead-guilty-in-smuggling-ring-that-brought-illegal-ivory-rhino-horn-into-u-s/</a>
GIST	<p>Two foreign nationals from the Democratic Republic of Congo have pleaded guilty in federal court in Seattle for acting as middle men in a smuggling ring that brought illegal ivory, rhinoceros horn and pangolin scales into the U.S.</p> <p>Cousins Herdade Lokua, 24, and Jospin Mujangi, 32, of Kinshasa, Congo, pleaded guilty to two counts of <a href="#">an 11-count indictment handed up last year</a> alleging they worked with a middle man to facilitate shipments of the poached items into Seattle.</p> <p>U.S. District Judge John Coughenour set the cousins' sentencing for Nov. 1. Both men face prison terms of up to five years on charges of conspiracy and violations of the Lacey Act, possible fines of up to \$250,000 and deportation from the U.S. when their sentences are complete, according to a plea agreement filed in U.S. District Court.</p> <p>According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the men acknowledged that beginning in November 2019 and continuing through June 2021, they shipped 49 pounds of ivory from Kinshasa, arranging for the tusks to be cut into smaller pieces, painted black, and labeled as imported wood.</p>

In June 2021, they brought in 5 more pounds of rhino horn and discussed a shipment of 4,000 pounds of ivory and a ton of pangolin scales, according to the DOJ.

The men admitted traveling from Congo to Seattle in November 2021 to meet in Edmonds with prospective buyers who were actually undercover federal agents. They were arrested after the meeting and [indicted by a Seattle grand jury](#).

The indictment alleged the shipments were in violation of the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#) — an international agreement among 183 nations, including the U.S. and Congo, aimed at protecting plants and animals threatened with extinction. The Lacey Act prohibits trafficking endangered wildlife or mislabeling shipments containing wildlife.

An undercover federal agent paid the men \$14,500 for the ivory and \$18,000 for the rhino horn, according to the indictment.

Officials have said [Washington has been a hub for smuggling illegal animal parts](#) because, in part, of its location as a travel hub on the West Coast and its proximity to Asia, where the demand for such items is high.

In all, the indictment alleges the men facilitated the smuggling of four packages containing a total of 49 pounds of ivory from endangered African elephants and 5 pounds of horn from the African white rhinoceros, also listed as an endangered species.

An additional \$3.5 million worth of ivory, rhino horns and pangolin scales was seized in Congo, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The two men were allegedly in talks to smuggle pangolin scales into the U.S., the indictment alleges.

The DOJ said Wednesday that the arrests were part of “Operation Kuluna,” an international cooperative investigation between Homeland Security, the Congolese government and U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 Guilty plea: disabled govt. communication
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/armed-man-arrested-in-olympic-national-park-pleads-guilty-to-interfering-with-government-communication-system/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/armed-man-arrested-in-olympic-national-park-pleads-guilty-to-interfering-with-government-communication-system/</a>
GIST	<p>A Port Angeles man <a href="#">accused of assaulting his girlfriend at Olympic National Park</a> and ranting about an impending revolution pleaded guilty on Wednesday to interfering with a government communication system.</p> <p>Caleb Jesse Chapman, 42, disabled the Olympic National Park radio communications site at the Blue Mountain summit early on Aug. 29, 2021, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for Western Washington said.</p> <p>The park’s radio repeater is used for emergency response, public safety and administrative communications, the office said.</p> <p>A few hours prior, just after midnight, Chapman went to a stranger’s home armed with a handgun and an AR-15 style rifle while high on methamphetamine, according to the office. He handed the stranger a letter outlining concerns over political events, difficulty getting ammunition and his belief that a revolution would ensue in the Olympic Peninsula, Texas and other places, the office said.</p> <p>Chapman drove his girlfriend to Olympic National Park, where he cut down a tree to block a road to the Deer Park campground, according to the office.</p> <p>Chapman told his girlfriend she was going to die in the revolution, the office said, and she called 911. He threw a can of soup at her, cutting her leg, according to the office.</p>

He's also accused of repeatedly slamming the woman's head against a car seat and then storming off into the woods with nine firearms and over 3,500 rounds of ammunition.

Officials as a result evacuated and closed a section of Olympic National Park. A drone located Chapman two days later, the office said, and he fired a short-barrel shotgun before surrendering without injury.

As part of his plea agreement in U.S. District Court in Tacoma, Chapman agreed to make restitution to people harmed by his actions and the partial closure of the park.

While interference with a federal communications system is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, prosecutors will recommend no more than 10 months in prison under Chapman's plea agreement.

[Return to Top](#)

HEADLINE	07/13 DOJ charges 2 for human smuggling cases
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/men-charged-separate-human-smuggling-cases/story?id=86774420">https://abcnews.go.com/US/men-charged-separate-human-smuggling-cases/story?id=86774420</a>
GIST	<p>Two men have been charged in separate incidents for allegedly attempting to smuggle more than 70 migrants each through a border patrol checkpoint in Texas, weeks after the <a href="#">deadliest human trafficking incident</a> in U.S. history.</p> <p>The departments of Justice and Homeland Security claim that Menietto Lateet Crawford, 41, and Denny Fuentes, 41, attempted to smuggle migrants across the border on June 14 and 15, respectively. The men were also each charged with conspiracy.</p> <p>The cases are nearly identical to the incident that killed more than 50 migrants near San Antonio on June 27, when dozens were found dead in a tractor-trailer.</p> <p>Though the charges against Crawford and Fuentes are similar, the cases are not related.</p> <p>Crawford allegedly had 80 people in a refrigerated truck, according to the Department of Justice. A K-9 found migrants inside of the vehicle when Crawford arrived at the Border Patrol checkpoint in Laredo, Texas, on June 14.</p> <p>Fuentes arrived at the same checkpoint the day after with more than 70 migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras in a refrigerated truck. He claimed that he was transporting "pig meat," according to the charges.</p> <p>Each man faces up to 20 years in federal prison and a possible \$250,000 fine if convicted, according to Homeland Security Investigations, the department's investigative unit.</p> <p>On June 27, 53 people died while trapped in a tractor-trailer in San Antonio. Temperatures reached a high of 103 degrees that day.</p> <p>While the trailer was refrigerated, it did not have a working air-conditioning unit, nor were there signs of any water.</p> <p>Authorities arrested and charged four men in connection with the suspected smuggling operation.</p> <p>Two of the men, if convicted, face up to life in prison and possibly the death penalty. Two other men were arrested on gun charges, federal authorities said.</p> <p>Texas has taken a tough approach in addressing border crossings by targeting migrants. The state's Department of Public Safety program launched the border security initiative "Operation Lone Star" in 2021 meant to restrict migrant crossings into Texas.</p> <p>The <a href="#">DOJ is investigating the program</a> for possible civil rights violations.</p>

HEADLINE	<b>07/13 Guilty: ex-CIA engineer in secret info theft</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/cia-engineer-convicted-massive-theft-secret-info-86766318">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/cia-engineer-convicted-massive-theft-secret-info-86766318</a>
GIST	<p>NEW YORK -- A former CIA software engineer was convicted Wednesday of federal charges accusing him of the biggest theft of classified information in CIA history.</p> <p>Joshua Schulte, who chose to defend himself at a New York City retrial, had told jurors in closing arguments that the CIA and FBI made him a scapegoat for an embarrassing public release of a trove of CIA secrets by WikiLeaks in 2017.</p> <p>Schulte watched without visibly reacting as U.S. District Judge Jesse M. Furman announced the guilty verdict on nine counts, which was reached in mid-afternoon by a jury that had deliberated since Friday.</p> <p>The so-called Vault 7 leak revealed how the CIA hacked Apple and Android smartphones in overseas spying operations, and efforts to turn internet-connected televisions into listening devices. Prior to his arrest, Schulte had helped create the hacking tools as a coder at the agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia.</p> <p>A sentencing date was not immediately set because Schulte still awaits trial on charges of possessing and transporting child pornography. He has pleaded not guilty.</p> <p>Attorney Sabrina Shroff, who advised Schulte during the trial, told Schulte's mother after the verdict that the outcome was a "kick to the gut, the brain and heart." It was unclear if Shroff was expressing her own sentiments or Schulte's.</p> <p>In his closing, Schulte claimed he was singled out even though "hundreds of people had access to (the information). ... Hundreds of people could have stolen it."</p> <p>"The government's case is riddled with reasonable doubt," he added. "There's simply no motive here."</p> <p>Prosecutors alleged the 33-year-old Schulte was motivated to orchestrate the leak because he believed the CIA had disrespected him by ignoring his complaints about the work environment. So he tried "to burn to the ground" the very work he had helped the agency to create, they said.</p> <p>Assistant U.S. Attorney David Denton encouraged jurors to consider evidence of an attempted cover-up, including a list of chores Schulte drew up that had an entry reading, "Delete suspicious emails."</p> <p>U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said in a statement that Schulte was convicted of "one of the most brazen and damaging acts of espionage in American history."</p> <p>Williams said Schulte, motivated by resentment toward the CIA, leaked to the public and to U.S. adversaries some of the nation's "most valuable intelligence-gathering cyber tools used to battle terrorist organizations and other malign influences around the globe."</p> <p>The prosecutor said Schulte knew the leak would render the CIA's tools "essentially useless, having a devastating effect on our intelligence community by providing critical intelligence to those who wish to do us harm."</p> <p>While behind bars awaiting trial, prosecutors said he continued his crimes by trying to leak additional classified materials as he carried on an "information war" against the government.</p> <p>Once the jury left the courtroom for deliberations, the judge complimented Schulte on his closing argument.</p>

“Mr. Schulte, that was impressively done,” Furman said. “Depending on what happens here, you may have a future as a defense lawyer.”

A mistrial was declared at Schulte’s original 2020 trial after jurors deadlocked on the most serious counts, including illegal gathering and transmission of national defense information. Schulte told the judge last year that he wanted to serve as his own attorney for the retrial.

He has not announced whether he wants to represent himself at his next trial, which involves allegations that after leaving the CIA, Schulte moved to New York from Virginia with a computer that contained images and videos of child pornography he had downloaded from the internet from 2009 to March 2017.

Schulte has been held behind bars without bail since 2018. Last year, he complained in court papers that he was a victim of cruel and unusual punishment, awaiting the two trials in solitary confinement inside a vermin-infested cell of a jail unit where inmates are treated like “caged animals.”

[Return to Top](#)

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